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They Ain't Poetry Magazines Anymore

I don't like hypocrites and I don't like crooks. There is something sacred about art and about writing. The labored sweat, the fight for personal expression and the fear of failure that accompanies the act of creation is precious. There is no excuse for exploiting that fragile creative drive. A person's art should be above the vicious manipulations of hustlers, agents, con men and unethical publishers. Sadly that is often not the case.

A creative work, be it novel, painting, film, song, article or play, does not become engaging, challenging and entertaining because of its promoter or where it appears. Those qualities are inherent in the original impetus that moved the writer to write, the artist to paint, the director to conceptualize and the filmmaker to shoot. The forum where that idea is presented to an audience is *not* more important than the work it presents.

Common sense, right? Sure, but try telling that to the Hollywood moguls, the Madison Avenue tycoons, the Broadway promoters, the gallery owners, the music "agents" and some fanzine publishers and see what answer you get. Their arrogance is both intimidating and revolting.

Unfortunately there isn't much one can do about the Dino De Laurentiis' and Neil Bogarts of the world. They seem to be routinely awarded artistic control by the moneymen. But there is no excuse for a fanzine that exploits its contributors, particularly if it masquerades as a critical barometer of the field. The policies of the magazine are set by its publishers and its editors, there are no financial backers pressuring for creative input.

It may surprise you that there are fanzines which turn a sizeable profit off the work of unpaid contributors. The publishers and editors of these "fanzines" maintain a comfortable lifestyle from the benefits of publishing. The real workers, the artists and writers who put money in their pockets, food on the table and pay the rent are offered only "complimentary" copies for their sweat and blood.

Often these are the same fanzines that continually criticize the lack of ethics in comics, movies and the publishing industry. One wonders why they do not subject themselves to the same malicious scrutiny they so readily inflict upon others.

There is an implicit responsibility when you employ or use another's talents. If someone is "good enough to be printed in your magazine, then they are good enough to be paid, if you are making a profit. To deny someone this reward for their work, when you are supported by their labor, is an unethical, unprofessional, unscrupulous and dirty practice.

Before taking this job, my experience with fandom had been that the fan market was too small to turn a profit with a magazine directed at the fans. One forerunner to this magazine, **Inside Comics**, paid its contributors and carried what was then a huge print run: 10,000 copies. **Inside Comics** folded after 4 issues.

At that time one did not expect payment for contributing to a fanzine. Most fanzines were small, limited-edition periodicals with circulations as miniscule as a poetry magazine. Back then, they were a labor of love, not profit. Like it or not, that is no longer the case.

To be fair, as a director I have often asked people to devote their time and energies to a project of mine for free. But I was never paid for those projects, nor did I make any profit.

Despite working for no pay, there was a mutual respect between the actors, the crew and myself. Although we were apprenticing or "paying our dues", there was an understanding that should a project ever succeed financially, everyone would be compensated for their time, their labor, their sweat and their talent. Occasionally we even gave voice to this non-verbal contract (which was as binding to us as the most complex corporate agreement), but that was usually unnecessary. One doesn't need agents, lawyers, executive producers or "promoters" when two people trust one another as a director and actor should.

I became close friends with Dennis Cieri when the two of us were part of a group of people learning to make movies. We struggled along, often shooting for an entire weekend (from Friday night to Monday morning) but no one thought of recieving payment for those long hours. Sometimes the director had to borrow money from the cast and crew to pay for his production. When available, that money was freely given, for everyone learned from the experience.

Dean Mullaney did some tricky camerawork for a scene from my screenplay. Shot inside an oven-like room on a raging-hot June night, using faulty equipment and staying deep into the next morning, he never complained.

There's a real professionalism in that attitude. It's a quality that emerges from a sincere love for your craft.

When I co-produced and directed a video adaptation of **Kennedy's Children**, the actors understood they would not be paid. The technicians that spent 2 days of their lives slavishly trying to fulfill my fervent and sometimes unreasonable demands upon their inexperienced skills were also paid with the "experience" of working on the project. No one was going to make a profit from the project, only the playwright was properly compensated for his work.

So I am not a stranger to working for free. It is an individual's choice whether one should work for someone who can't afford to pay them. But it is not right for an employer to profit from your work without giving you even a small share of his earnings.

Frankly, I was surprised that Dennis could afford to reimburse me for quitting my full-time job to edit **The Comic Times**. Visions of **Inside Comics**' ridiculous estimate of the size of the fan market made such an idea ridiculous, but in my absence, comic fandom has grown. Aided by the development of the direct distribution system, fandom had become an organized business. Fanzines were now being produced for profit as well as love. Circulations had risen to unheard of heights, a print run of 10,000 was matter-of-factly accepted.

So fandom has changed for better or worse. They ain't poetry magazines no more friend, this is big business. Fandom now supports small circulation magazines, not *limited*-edition periodicals. Ten thousand copies every two weeks, four weeks, six weeks, or eight weeks is pretty big bucks for a one or two man operation. Of course that doesn't include any side ventures that the publisher may or may not indulge in for profit.

There is nothing wrong with making a profit, in fact it's a desireable habit to acquire if you hope to remain in business. But when you make a profit, your workers deserve a salary. Any other practice is corrupt and nasty.

I don't like to see people ripped-off, particularly people who share my affection and respect for the medium. If someone makes a profit off your work then you deserve to be paid, even if the amount of payment is slight. There's a principal at issue here, your ideas and your work are important enough to be paid for, if the publisher can afford it.

* * *

To headline this issue, David M. Singer chats with popular comic book artist George Perez. George, who also contributes the gorgeous illustration that adorns our front cover, talks about women, breaking into comics, women, co-creating **The New Teen Titans**, women, his approach to penciling a "group" comic and women.

The new feature cartoon **Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown (And Don't Come Back!)** is the subject of this month's column by Don McGregor. I had heard some pretty ugly rumors about Don and missed deadlines. As far as my experience is concerned, they are untrue. In addition to **Investigating Detectives, Inc.** which will appear next month, Don has already prepared **Three Perceptions: Angelic, Bloody and Distorted** for our fifth issue.

Premiering this month is our new column **Books** by Doug Murray. This column will keep you abreast of what's new and upcoming in publishing.

Frank Lovece offers a look at a new phenomenon, the video magazine in **Birth of a Videozine**. It's nice to finally be working with Frank after I had promised him an article (which I never completed) for his magazine **Nimbus**, 5 years ago.

This month we cut to a close up of **The Legend of The Lone Ranger** by Jim Burns. Then our new full-time production person, Dan Perkins, delves into the mystery of Betty Boop's Presidential campaign.

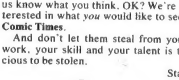
Modesty forbids me from doing more than mentioning the existence of **A View From the Underground: The Inner City Romance Comic**, written by yours truly. Hopefully you will enjoy the piece as much as I enjoyed presenting it to you.

Finally Ken Gale tells us **Whatever Happened to...Gardner Fox**. Ken had a difficult time tracking Gardner down and would like to thank Rich Morrissey for his generous help. Both Ken and I hope that you enjoy this report on one of the deans of comic book writers.

So sit back and enjoy the magazine and let us know what you think, OK? We're very interested in what *you* would like to see in **The Comic Times**.

And don't let them steal from you. Your work, your skill and your talent is too precious to be stolen.

Stay loose



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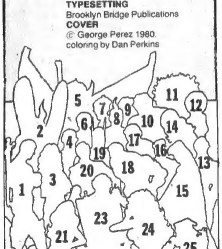

The following is a list of all the characters on this issue's cover, courtesy of George Perez and Len Wein.

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(**The Comic Times** apologizes for any inaccuracies in coloring: color schemes for some of the new characters had yet to be decided as we went to press.)

The Comic Times

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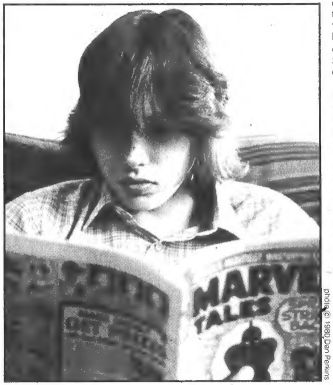
GUEST COMMENT

by **Dean Mullaney**

Are you aware that Steve Ditko brought his unique stylization to horses in a western story in the 1950s *Two-Gun Western #4*? Or that Carmine Infantino and Stan Lee collaborated on some stories for Marvel/Atlas around the same time. Or that Leonard Starr (of *Mary Perkins* and *Annie* fame) drew "Pow-Wow Smith," a back-up in *Detective Comics* in the early 1950s?

If you did know about any of these interesting and worthwhile examples of comic book work, it's probably the result of someone taking the time to research older comics and compiling that information into an index.

In the past few years, indexes of popular artists such as Neal Adams, John Byrne and Frank Brunner have been compiled and offered for sale. But in general, there has been very little work done in cataloguing comic books and their creators. Many books are available featuring indexes of filmmakers, actors, novelists, playwrights, etc., but you can't even find many indexes about the creators of comics in the comic book specialty shops. Why the lack of information about comic books? Perhaps the general public does not think comics are worth the effort. Yet what about us, those who appreciate the medium? Why, if you are interested in the work of John Buscema, for example, can't you buy an index to his work? Why can't you buy an index to the work of Jack Kirby, or Stan Lee or Otto Binder? If no one else is interested enough in the history of comics and its creators, why don't we set out to accomplish the task? Perhaps if we begin taking the medium seriously by cataloguing its history and personnel, others might take it seriously, too.



Drawing © 1980 Dave Cockrum

We have already made the same mistake perpetrated by the film industry: Prints and even records of many early films are lost. Yet the film industry *has* realized the importance of keeping its own history, and it's not too late for us to make up for our own stupidity and lack of foresight. While films are, of course, credited, comic books prior to the mid-1960s were not. However, comics have been considered "collectable," and nearly every comic book ever published survives in one person's collection or another's. And yet collectively we do nothing about cataloguing those comics and their creators outside of making "want lists" for those issues we don't have.

If you are in any way serious about our interest in and love for this medium, we must get together, pool our resources and index every comic book ever produced. From a purely historical perspective, the history of comic books must be preserved and shared. It would be a damn shame if the records of early comic books are lost forever. And the only people with the interest to preserve that history are us, the comic book readers, professionals and publishers.

In addition to the purely historical necessity, indexing can also be of great help to the collector. If, for example, you want to acquire all of the comics drawn by Joe Kubert, there's no way you will know what issues of what books he illustrated. That is, without a pre-existing index to guide you. Even Stan Lee doesn't remember every comic he wrote.

There is one organized group dedicated to indexing comics. It's called *Apa-I* (for Index) with twenty members. But those few people who are actively indexing comic books cannot do it alone. We've got to band together and accomplish the goal. If any of you are indexers yourself and want to contact other indexers, or perhaps you have a sizeable collection of comics and are willing to research certain comics for the compilers, you can write for information about the group to Gene Reed, 3708 Lakewood Drive, Huntsville, AL 35811.

Members of *Apa-I* trade information and gladly help out each other in their various projects. For example, Lou Mougin and Cat Yronwode are attempting the gargantuan task of indexing Steve Ditko's work. Not only has Ditko produced some of the most visually exciting comics, but he's been prolific as hell. Research in my own collection netted the *Two-Gun Western* story mentioned above, among others. Everyone's help is needed, in this Ditko index and in others. I'm currrently trying to compile a Gene Colan checklist and he's been drawing comics since 1946. I don't have, or even know about every comic he's drawn. I've had the opportunity to talk with Gene and he's given me some good leads. For instance, did you know that he drew a couple of *Blackhawks* for Reed Crandall in the 1950s? Which issues he doesn't recall, but the work *is* there for me, or someone else to try and pinpoint.

Getting the chance to talk to a particular writer, artist or editor is invaluable, even if it only gives you some leads on where to look. And it is an unfortunate fact that some of the pioneers of comics are now deceased and many others are getting on in years.

Projects such as the Ditko and Colan indexes are huge tasks, tasks which will take more than one or two people to accomplish. If we're to realize the preservation of comic book history and the careers of its creators, we must pool our resources. Think about it. ■

© 1980 Dean Mullaney

TODAY'S ARMY WITH DOPIN' DAN
©1971 BY TED RICHARDS
NOW YOU LOOK LIKE REAL SOLDIERS WITH YOUR NEW HAIRCUTS!
HERE'S YOUR THREE-DAY PASSES..
WHO ELSE LOOKS LIKE THIS, EXCEPT G.I.'S?
LOOK LIKE A SOLDIER
SOME DEAL— NEW G.I. STYLE HAIRCUTS FOR THREE DAY PASSES.
YEAH — ALL TH' DECENT WOMEN WILL STILL KNOW WE'RE G.I.'S!
YEAH — SCREW-IT! WE'RE G.I.'S — RIGHT?! SO WHY TRY TO HIDE-IT. LET'S GO DOWNTOWN AND BE G.I.'S — REAL G.I.'S!!!
RIGHT-ON! WHAT DO WE GOT TO LOSE?!
A FEW HOURS LATER
RECORDS · BOOKS · PIPES ·
HOUSE OF OZONK
PIZZA
HA HA HA LOOK AT ALL TH' G.I.'S!
HEY! IT'S NO USE SUCKERS! TH' WHOLE TOWN KNOWS YOU'RE IN TH' ARMY!
HEY-THIS JOINT LOOKS INTERESTIN'.
THE DAMAGE CLUB

??
THIS WHOLE PLACE AIN'T GOIN' NO WHERE. I'M BORED AND CRAZY DON'T MESS WIT' ME...
THIS PO-GO DANCIN' IS NOTHIN' FOR A PARATROOPER!
YOU LOOK JUST LIKE REAL GI'S! I LOVE IT!!
YEAH, WE WORK AT IT...
YEAH, IT'S A NEAT IMAGE..
NEXT DAY, THE WORD IS OUT!
YOUR "LOOK LIKE A SOLDIER" CAMPAIGN IS A TOTAL SUCCESS, SGT. TURDY....
UH, YES SIR, BUT SOMETHIN' SCREWY IS GOIN' ON, AND I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT...

IN OUR LAST EPISODE... NOTHING HAPPENED, REALLY!

BLOWTORCH II ©80 m.somen

ARE YEW EXPERIENCED, YOUNG MAN?

OH, YES INDEEDY! UH... EXPERIENCED IN WHAT?

SO THIS WAS WEEDE...THE MAN I WAS HIRED TO PROTECT AGAINST MURDER! FUNNY HOW MY KEEN SENSE OF DETECTION PICKS UP CHARACTERISTICS SO QUICKLY. FOR EXAMPLE, A TWITCH IN HIS EYE MEANT HE'D GO BLIND IN 20 MONTHS. HIS YELLOW NAILS MEANT HE SMOKED FOUR CIGARS A DAY. AND HIS LACK OF HAIR MEANT HE WAS BALD.

IF YEW ARE TO BE CARETAKER OF MY EXOTIC PETS, YEW MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH EACH SPECIES! WHAT DO YEW CALL THAT?

THAT'S A... UH... BIRD?

CLOSE ENOUGH! CAN'T AFFORD TO BE CHOOSY ABOUT CARETAKERS, YEW KNOW... MY LAST ONE DEVELOPED A GHASTLY ALLERGY WHICH PROVED FATAL!

REALLY? WHAT WAS HE ALLERGIC TO?

TO...HEE!...PYTHONS!

THIS GUY GIVIN' YOU ANY TROUBLE, BOSS?

NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER, RUD! MEET MY PART-TIME BODYGUARD, "BOUNCER"!

PLEASED TO MEET'CHA.

P-PLEASURE'S ALL YOURS.

HE WAS A BIG ONE. THIS LUG. BIG LUGS COULD HURT YOU. THAT'S WHY I HAVE A WAY OF DEALING WITH BIG LUGS WHO THINK THEY COULD PUSH ME AROUND. I LET THEM PUSH ME AROUND.

Murad

HI, SWEET-PLUM.

LISTEN, VOGUE - WE GOTTA KNOCK OFF YOUR HUSBAND WEEPE FAST. YESTERPAY, WHEN I WAS AT MY JOB IN THE BAR...

...BIG AL HIMSELF PAID ME A VISIT!

ARE YOUSE GONNA COME UP WITH THE GREEN YOUSE OWE ME, BOUNCER? HUH, ARE YOUSE? HUH? HUH? HUH?

...SURE, (CHOKE!) BIG AL.

SMACK SMACK SMACK

HE HUMILIATED ME! SOMEPAY I'LL SHOW 'IM... I'LL HAVE MY OWN MOB!

LOOK, LOVER... I CAN'T STAND SPENDING ANOTHER NIGHT WITH THE SAGGING FLESH OF THAT WORM! I'M WITH YOU - LET'S GET RID OF WEEPE QUICKLY, AND YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE MONEY YOU NEED!

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT. I JUST (HAR) UNLOCKED THE CAGE OF HIS PYTHON...

OH BOUNCER... YOU'RE TOO MUCH! JUST TOO MUCH! TOO MUCH!

HEH... I REALLY TURN YOU ON, HUH, PRECIOUS CARBO?

NO, YOU'RE SQUEEZING ME TOO MUCH, YOU APE! LEMME GO!

NOW, RUD!...YEW MUST PAY METICULOUS ATTENTION TO THE FEEDING SCHEDULES OF MY PETS. WHEN TO FEED THEM, WHAT TO FEED THEM...

MR. WEEDE! THE SNAKE!

NUMBSKULL! DIDN'T I JUST TELL YEW NOT TO FEED MY PETS ANYTHING THAT ISN'T ON THE DIET?

AN ATTEMPT ON WEEDE'S LIFE! HE SHOULD COUNT HIS LUCKY STARS THAT I'M KEEPING MY PRIVATE EYE ON HIM. AT LEAST NOW WE KNOW THERE'S A GANG OF THREE PLOTTING HIS MURDER - WEEPE'S WIFE, HER LOVER, AND THE SNAKE!

GEORGE PÉREZ

by David M. Singer

Photo © 1987 David M. Singer

DAVE: *You just recently celebrated a birthday, didn't you?*

GEORGE: That's right. I was born on June 9, 1954, and I was raised in the South Bronx; the ghetto section of the South Bronx.

DAVE: *The South Bronx! Is that what motivated you to become an artist?*

GEORGE: Basically. Drawing became a means of escape for me. Rather than becoming a street kid, and always getting involved with fights—which was the easiest thing to do—I just got interested in drawing. I began to draw when I was 5 years old, and I have just continued to draw, ever since. I didn't mean to get interested in comics, per se, as a profession, until I was in high school.

DAVE: *Are you married now?*

GEORGE: No, divorced.

DAVE: *Do you want to talk about that, or is it just a statistic?*

GEORGE: No, that's okay. My career got in the way and there are a few things that she and I had to learn to deal with as individuals, and if she and I ever remarry, or if I ever marry someone else, hopefully I'll be a better individual than I was the first time I got married. I don't want to make the same mistake of putting my career ahead of a relationship, which a lot of artists and writers tend to do. I want to feel comfortable that I have set hours, work a certain amount of time, and have the rest of the time for the family, leisure, whatever. I'm finally getting a formula down. I work about a 10 hour day. But, it's going to take a little while to get used to it. I've only been divorced a little over a year.

DAVE: *How old were you when you got married?*

GEORGE: I was 19 and she was 18. So obviously we were married quite young. We really did love each other, but we really didn't know each other all that well. And as we got to know each other, we figured there was a lot of incompleteness about each other. There are certain things she can only do if she's left alone. And there are certain things I can only do when I am left alone. The marriage got in the way, too. So, the decision was that after five and a half years it wasn't going to go anywhere and rather than hate each other, we got a divorce, and now we're incredibly good friends. I'm doing well, and she's started to get her act together, and hopefully, even it we don't get back together again, we'll enjoy a good life.

DAVE: *You said that you first started drawing when you were five. You started drawing because you needed an outlet?*

GEORGE: Yeah. Comics helped me learn how to read. I was bored in the bathroom one time, and the hamper was there, and a pencil was handy, and I started doodling on the hamper. It was almost a means of escape, or just a world that I had total control of, since I had no control of anything else outside. I never really cared much for the attitude of the street life and everything. And I was a very shy, introverted boy. I just kept on drawing. This was the one thing that I could do that maybe another person couldn't do as well. Because I didn't have very many friends, I didn't date until my late teens. So I figured it was something to do.

DAVE: *Where did you get the idea of art, as opposed to drawing on a hamper?*

GEORGE: I think I just grew into it. Before, it was just doodling. Even now, I enjoy drawing very much. And I'm getting paid for it. It's a real kicker. I'm having the time of my life and getting paid to do it. I'd prefer that most editors didn't know it, but this is the type of thing I'd do for nothing. I enjoy doing it and I'make a good living out of it. Since I enjoy doing it, I can do it faster. It never became art for art's sake. It was always just a pleasure to do. The reason it wasn't art to me, is I was never given any art lessons. I am self-taught from day one. It was something where, it was just me being expressed, because there was no one else to say, "No, you can't do it this way, or this is not the way you draw a certain thing." I may have done things wrong. (laughter) I was just having a lot of fun. It was more a part of living than an actual separation of art and life. For me, art was life.

". . .I'd prefer that most editors didn't know it, but [comics] is the type of thing I'd do for nothing . . ."

HEY!!!
FOLLOWS THROUGH WITH FLOWING ACTION AND
CRIPES! I'M PULLIN' THE TRIGGER— BUT NOTHIN' HAPPENS!
AS I SHOOT HE SHOVE HIS FACE RIGHT INTO THE BARREL OF MY GUN AND THE SHOCK OF THE EXPLOSION BLOWS ENERGY OUT OF THE BARREL AND OUT OF THE EARTH!
HOW HIS FEET ARE OUT OF CONTACT AND MALLOY'S GOT NOTHING
© 1980 DC Comics Inc.

I admire Curt [Swan] because he is so naturalistic, he can draw so clearly Anderson-from *Action* 419

Excerpt above-Curt Swan inked by Murphy

DAVE: *So, you didn't just see comics and try to draw them, you were drawing and comics were just your models?*

GEORGE: Yeah. I drew comics because, at five years old, that was the only kind of art I was really exposed to. I wasn't taken to museums at age five. Comics had pretty pictures, and I just tried to copy them. Obviously, I was quite crude at five. But, I enjoyed it. A child needs to be imaginative. I enjoyed these strange super hero types. I'm trying to remember... *Superman* was probably the first influence. But, I just drew for the hell of drawing. I enjoyed costumed characters. I enjoyed Superheroes. I enjoyed anything that had the slightest thing to do with fantasy. And I just kept creating, as most artists at that young age would do, creating your own characters. They were the most grotesquely simple-minded characters in the world, but it was fun to do it. And it also helped me in my school work, as far as English or anything that had to do with the arts other than drawing. That was something. I took courses in music appreciation, but I never had an art course. The closest thing to an art course I had was Mechanical Drawing, which they gave me because they didn't have an art course, and they figured it was the nearest thing. I was ready to slug them for that.

DAVE: *So, right through high school you had no formal training?*

GEORGE: I had no formal training, right up through high school. Actually the only formal training I had (and you can't even call it formal training) was when I broke into the business. My art was crude, and I still didn't know anything about perspective, (which kind of tells you how desperate they were to get people in). I was getting paid for learning, because I was already drawing my own comics at the time. At that point, although I could make a person look like a person, I still didn't know the basics; perspective, actual anatomy, foreshortening, how to place shadows, the wrinkles in clothing, things that somebody has to train you to do. And luckily, our art director, John Romita, a few editors, and a few other artists, were always there to say what I was doing wrong. And once I let my ego get out of the way, I found out that if I had to pay for those kind of lessons, it would have cost me a fortune. So I actually got my formal art training on the job.

DAVE: *If* Superman *was your first comic influence, do you see George Klein or Curt Swan's style in your work?*

GEORGE: My chief influences when I was very young were Curt Swan, Jack Kirby and Gil Kane. I just admire Curt because he is so naturalistic; he can draw so clearly. Any Marvel book I picked up at the time, was Jack's. Jack brought an excitment to the work. I loved Gil because I loved the Green Lantern character. There were other artists that were not all that influential, but I still learned from them. Like Steve Ditko, because of the work he did on *Dr. Strange*. It just looked so different that I finally realized that not every artist is going to draw a character the same way that another artist will. That's when I finally noticed differences in style. Ditko introduced me to that. Now that I've started to ink, now that I'm inking my own covers, my dream is to someday ink Curt Swan. It's like coming full circle, because I love his work. And as a matter of fact, I think he's one of the most underrated artists around because he has a very natural style. He's not a dynamic artist, but then he doesn't claim to be.

DAVE: *Well, I think that anything associated with Superman is underrated, because Superman is so constant.*

LET ME HAVE THOSE CONTROLS, BEN!
HOLD ON TO SUE--WE'RE IN TROUBLE--BIG TROUBLE!!
WE'RE STRIKING SOME SORT OF INVISIBLE VIBRATION FIELD--IT'S TRYING TO SHAKE THE PLANE TO PIECES!
IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP--BUT IF WE CONTINUE--WE'RE DONE FOR!
YA SUMMED IT UP LIKE A LIVIN' DOLL, MISTER!! NOW TELL US WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT!!
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Jack [Kirby] brought an excitement to the work *Fantastic Four* 64

The above excitement is from I loved G.I. Kanel because I loved the Green Lantern character Panel reprinted from Green Lantern 44

GEORGE: Right. Also, it's not only that there's nothing new in the character itself, but today most artists do not last on a particular series very long. They jump around from time to time, from story to story, from character to character. Like when Neal Adams worked on the *Avengers*. All of a sudden, it was a sudden change. The *Avengers* had gone through enough artists at that point that it became an art book. You picked up the book and you not only read it and enjoyed the story, but you wondered who was going to draw it now. Superman has been drawn by the same artist for almost 20 years. So interest in it starts waning. It's almost like it was too good. You know, okay, you got what you expected. There was nothing really new there. It happened for awhile to *Tomb of Dracula* with Gene Colan. Gene Colan is a magnificent artist. He's a painter with a pencil. He did beautiful work on *Tomb of Dracula*. But since he was doing it every issue, people started losing their appreciation for it.

DAVE: *I thought his work was well accepted by the fans.*

GEORGE: Yes. I know. His work was gorgeous. And I had seen the pencils, too. It was a shame that *Howard the Duck* was the book which made him a fan favorite. Then people started looking back at his other work. Because Howard was a fan character to begin with, when Gene Colan picked up in the series, it was like, "Okay, now he's the *Howard the Duck* artist". But he had a career way before that, and was doing beautiful work.

It's just like any artist who stays on one thing for a long period of time. You start losing the appreciation because he's no longer new. But with a good creative artist, you can always tell that he's fresh. My greatest pleasure in starting to work for DC is finally getting to see what Curt Swan's pencils look like. I think very few inkers do Curt justice. And I'm just amazed at the man's freshness, that after so many years of drawing the same character, he's not bored with this guy. Curt's a true professional. He stays on forever. His style has made Superman, basically. The Superman look is Curt Swan's look. As a matter of fact; very few artists draw Superman the way Curt Swan does. And as long as Curt's alive, I'm sure he's going to keep on drawing Superman. [laughter] And he's going to be known as the Superman artist. I would like to see him do other things. But obviously he's got his niche there.

DAVE: *Marvel was the first company to employ you as an artist?*

GEORGE: First, and up until a few months ago the only employer I had as an artist. Well, actually I did work for *National Lampoon*.

DAVE: *How did you get into Marvel?*

GEORGE: Well, I got into Marvel through Rich [Buckler]. It's not like I got in through the back door. As he walked in, I snuck in behind him. I was at a convention showing my artwork when DC was having their junior bullpen tryouts, and although I made a lot of twists and turns, I just never seemed to find my way into that. But Rich Buckler was at the show, and at the time, he had just taken over the *Fantastic Four*, and he was drawing *Thor*, and he was going to create a new series called *Deathlok*. He saw my work and tried showing it to Warren's editor, Bill DuBay. He had shown it to Marvel, and obviously, I did need a lot of work. Anyone could see I did not know the basics. I was working as a bank teller at the time, in one of those real glorifying jobs.

". . . Once you make it in, unless you're really bad, or economic conditions are really poor, comic companies try to keep you working . . ."

I finally realized that not every artist is going to draw a character the same way that another artist will Strange that helped Perez realize stylistic differences Excerpt from *Strange Tales* 132

It was Steve Ditko s Dr

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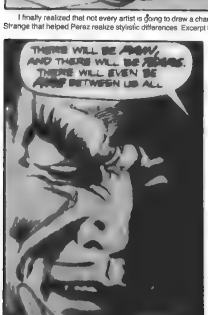


Perez on the dangers of consistency

[Gene Colan] did beautiful work on *The Tomb of Dracula*. But since he was doing it every issue people started losing their appreciation for it

Panels from *Tomb of Dracula* 55

© Comics Code Group

DAVE: *For how long?*

GEORGE: The minute I got out of high school. I was 18 at the time. And I had gotten married, and I received a call at the bank from Rich saying he needed an assistant. The business association between Rich and me didn't work well. Our egos clashed, and our styles were just totally incompatible. The one thing that Rich managed to do was at least get my name known. There was a point, after Rich and I split up when we were on unfriendly terms. Thankfully we're back on talking terms again.

There was a strip, *The Man-Wolf*, that no one wanted to do. George Tuska had been drawing it, but he was committed to *Planet of the Apes*, the black and white magazine. So, there was no one to draw *Man-Wolf*. They needed one person to fill in, at least on one issue, so they could keep the schedule going. Jim Salicrup, who was, I believe, a proofreader at the time, asked about me. They called me up, and I did it.

It was real crude work at best. But at least I had made it in. Once you make it in, unless you're really bad, or economic conditions are really poor, comic companies try to keep you working. They feel a certain loyalty to you. And I was the pits, I was terrible. Klaus Janson saved me, because he fixed up all the rotten things that I was doing.

At the same time, there was this black and white strip, the *Sons of the Tiger* in *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*, which was a strip that *nobody* wanted to draw because it was a turkey! It was just one of those strips about which everyone was saying, "When are we going to get rid of this strip?" So, they figured, "Well, we've got an inventory story here. Let's give it to someone. George Perez is available and no one else is going to do it and he'll do anything at this point." So I did it. By the time I left *Sons of the Tiger*, after doing about 15 issues of it, Bill Mantlo and I had managed to make it the chief feature of *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*.

The *Man-Wolf*, I've been told, was the second highest selling Marvel horror magazine, after *Dracula*, by the time I left that series. And they were both strips that everyone just wanted to get rid of. It gave me a good training ground, and after six months, I took over the *Fantastic Four*. I was stunned when Roy Thomas asked me to do it.

DAVE: *You wouldn't happen to know the number of the first comic you did, would you?*

GEORGE: Yes. The very first comic that has my name was actually *Astonishing Tales* #25, which was the introduction of *Deathlok*. There was a two-page back-up cartoon showing what's supposed to be Rich Buckler and Doug Moench creating a

character, tossing every idea into the trash, and then as they leave the office, out of this trash can full of discarded ideas comes Deathlok. It was a silly cartoon, and that was the first thing that had my by-line.

My first full story was *Monsters Unleashed* #8, which featured *Gulliver Jones, Warrior of Mars*. It was also considered probably the worst black and white story that Marvel had ever printed. [laughter]

DAVE: *Because of your art?*

GEORGE: Because of my art. I fully admit I was totally unprepared for it. I had to rush it. Originally Rich Buckler was supposed to draw it with me helping him out, although I would finally get a credit. But Rich was wrapped up on his *Deathlok*, and he was behind schedule on his other books. When I ended up getting it on my own, I was not ready for it. The inker we were supposed to get, Pablo Marcos, was also committed to *Deathlok*, so we ended up getting an amateur inker as well. It ended up being a total atrocity. I look back on that, and I am very, very happy that Marvel kept me working after that. Because I can understand why anyone would have been angry after seeing that. It was a good story and I botched it up.

DAVE: *What was your first four-color story?*

GEORGE: My first four-color, not counting that *Deathlok* thing, was *Creatures On the Loose* #33 which was my first *Man-Wolf*. And I did the *Man-Wolf* from issue 33 to issue 37, when the series itself was cancelled.

"...If my schedule permitted, I'd still love to do for Marvel and they know it..."

DAVE: *Jim Shooter was originally supposed to write the* Man-Wolf *series when it was supposed to get its own comic. Would you have been the artist?*

GEORGE: I didn't even know that it was supposed to get its own book. I was supposed to stay on as the artist on the *Man-Wolf*. That was also when I got the okay to do the *Avengers* while Roy had already asked me about the *Fantastic Four*. Then I received a phone call assigning me the *Inhumans* series. Something had to give, and it was *Man-Wolf*. If the book hadn't been cancelled, they were going to give it to Don Heck. So either way #37 would have been my last issue on *Man-Wolf*, whether or not the book was cancelled. Before, I was starving for work, and suddenly I was assigned more work than I could handle.

DAVE: *What was your favorite series at Marvel?*

GEORGE: *The Avengers*. Strictly because I'm a group man, and *The Avengers* has always been the series that allowed me the most interplay, because all the characters are so different. *The Fantastic Four* were too much like a family, and since there were only four of them, you could only create interplay to a limited degree. *The Avengers* had this constantly rotating membership. I must have drawn at least 15 of their members doing the course of my career, if not more.

DAVE: *You never got Hercules, did you?*

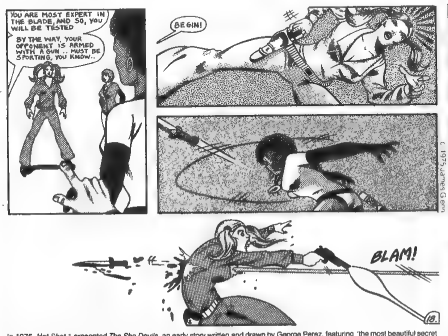
GEORGE: Hercules? Only in a scene in issue #150, in one panel, in which Hercules and Black Widow are looking at a television program telling of the new membership for *The Avengers*. But by the time he became an active character again; I had left the series. Just when he came in, I had gone out. Same thing with Black Widow. Black Widow was a central character during all those issues after I left.

DAVE: *Why have you for the most part left Marvel?*

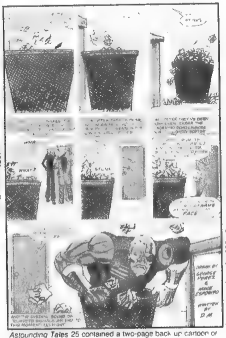
GEORGE: Actually, I left Marvel because I was doing three books: *The Avengers, The Justice League of America* and *The Teen Titans* which were all behind schedule when I got them. *The Avengers* was three months behind schedule and I managed to get it down to one. *The Teen Titans* was put on a very tight schedule, and then they decided to make a freebie issue, that appeared in *DC Comics Presents* #26. I didn't start *The Justice League* until 2½ weeks after Dick Dillin's death so the book was late. With all that extra work, plus the *Fantastic Four Annual* plus the *Firestorm* series that I'm still committed on...

DAVE: *And you had some covers.*

GEORGE: ...and covers, something had to give. I draw about a book a week and


YOU ARE MOST EXPERT IN THE BLADE, AND SO, YOU WILL BE TESTED
BY THE WAY, YOUR OPPONENT IS ARMED WITH A GUN... MUST BE 3 PORTING, YOU KNOW...
BEGIN!
BLAM!

In 1975, *Hot Shot* 1 presented *The She Devils*, an early story written and drawn by George Perez, featuring "the most beautiful secret agents since Modesty Blaise, Emma Peel, Honey West, etc."



Astounding Tales 25 contained a two-page back up cartoon of the origin of Deathlok which was Perez' first credited work for Marvel.

© 1992 Marvel Comics Group

that limits me to doing only one issue of each book per month. I also had vacation time coming, and it was just a decision I had to make. They're three books I love dearly. *The Titans*, I'm co-creating so I could not drop that because it's basically my book. There would not have been a new *Teen Titans* book if I had not agreed to do it. I had just gotten the Justice League so I was not going to screw that up. *The Avengers* was the one book that I had done the most for. It could survive my absence easily. There are a lot of good artists at Marvel.

It would have been unfair of me to tell Marvel to use a couple of fill-in artists, until I could draw the book because of the Marvel incentive program. If you do six issues straight, you get a bonus. If you do twelve issues straight, you get another bonus. And it would be unfair of me to expect another artist to come in just for two or three issues, until I could come back. Why shouldn't he be able to work for the bonus? So I wrote a letter to Marvel, saying that I had to resign on *The Avengers*.

I have absolutely no regret about working for Marvel. If my schedule permitted, I'd still love to do work for Marvel and they know it. But, since I'm not doing a regular strip now, if they have inventory assignments or special projects, they'll throw it to one of their regular people. That's the way it should be. They give their best assignments to those who are constantly doing work for them. I can understand that policy.

Man-Wolf was Perez' first regular four color book. It was real crude work at best, says Perez. The panel above is from the *Man-Wolf* story which appeared in *Marvel Premiere* 45.

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The only reason I started doing work for DC, was that I had started to get in a bit of a rut. I needed some kind of change and I enjoy a lot of the DC characters. And I am a free-lance by nature. I'd had almost no previous contact with DC. My contract had expired at Marvel. Since I had been going through a divorce, I never could handle the contract, and they terminated it, 'which' was very understandable of them. But it suddenly gave me a freedom to do stuff for some of the other books.

Some of my friends, like Marv Wolfman, had gone over to DC and I thought, well, if they're interested in me doing some work there, I'd like to try it, and still do work for Marvel. *The Avengers* had to be the one book sacrificed, and so I ended up being a DC artist, almost [laughter] totally by accident.

If Marvel ever wants me to do an assignment, deadlines permitting, of course, I'd be happy to. I have no malice toward Marvel at all in any of that. In fact I think Marvel has treated me incredibly well, and so has DC. I've been incredibly lucky in both places.

DAVE: *I'm glad to hear that, because there have been some rumors going around that there was a bad taste when you left, and I was hoping it wouldn't be true, because I wouldn't like to have to get into that sort of thing.*

GEORGE: No hard feelings at all. I dealt mostly with Jim Salicrup, and I didn't like putting Jim in a tight spot all the time. I could understand Jim's feelings. He was the one who always had to speak to Jim Shooter. And Jim Shooter was already understandably a little apprehensive of me working at DC. I guess he felt that if I was suddenly doing two books at DC and one at Marvel, why should the Marvel book be sacrificed, and not a DC book?

My decision had to be made totally on my own, because it would have been unfair of me to expect Jim Salicrup to have to tell Jim Shooter "Well, George'll be back but he had to do the work at DC first." Jim's editor-in-chief of Marvel, and there's no reason why he should stand still and say, "Well, okay, we'll allow George to do his work for the competition," since *The Justice League* is a direct competitor to *The Avengers*.

So, I know that my reasons for giving up *The Avengers* might be misconstrued, and probably some people are going to be a little upset by it. Probably management, more than anyone else: "Well, we lost another top artist to the other company." But, that's why I wrote the letter. I wanted to express, in writing, that I had no malice and to keep the door open, if they want me. I did not do it out of any vindictive feelings, because I *love* the company, and I wish I could have remained.

Right now, the most common thing to hear is that an artist or a writer, who is suddenly leaving a company is angry with it. But that has absolutely no bearing on why I left. I've always been satisfied. In fact Jim Shooter has been getting a hell of a lot of bad press. But he's always treated me *incredibly fairly*. He's always been good to me. He's always given me advice when I needed it. I enjoyed his friendship, having worked on a one to one basis on *The Avengers*, when he was writing it. Someday, I hope that I can do work for him again. Being free-lance, I don't think that will be unlikely, because now that I have a decent name, hopefully my name will help sell a book.

Jim has made a lot of hard decisions. He's become unpopular because of that. But no editor really remains popular with everybody, you know. There's people who criticized Roy and criticized Len Wein. It's just a fact of life. I try to keep out of the politics side of it. It's not as bad as it's been made to sound. The Marvel sales have gone up. They're doing a bigger business than they've ever done before.

DAVE: *Would you say a little Bohemia is forming now, at DC, of ex-Marvel people?*

GEORGE: Well, it almost seems that way. Particularly now that Roy has gone over there. Also, the atmosphere at DC has changed a bit. They now have most of the younger people back there. Every single ex-editor with the exception of Archie Goodwin is now over at DC.

DAVE: *And Archie used to be at DC.*

GEORGE: And Archie used to be. He's a power unto himself, anyway, because he has virtual autonomy at Marvel. When I went over to DC I expected the aristocracy to be at DC, and the people doing it for fun to be at Marvel. You know DC would have the white shirts and ties and Marvel would be the blue collar workers. The whole attitude at Marvel when I was there (well you can't say I'm really gone, I still have some work to finish up for them)

> *"...I haven't noticed a single damn difference in the way DC's run compared to how Marvel is run..."*

was the fact that everything was being done for fun. It was pretty haphazard, deadlines were late and the attitude was, "Oh what do we care. We'll get the book out eventually." They are being a little stricter about that now, and probably as far as the business end is concerned, that's quite good. But DC is the stickler for deadlines. Everything's ahead of schedule, everything has to be done.

There were rumors saying they had a certain limit of words per page, a certain limit of panels per page, certain limits of how many words you put in every balloon. You hear all these horror stories. So you can imagine my impression of DC was of a gigantic martinet society compared to the happy-go-lucky Hermes and everyone else roaming around this mythological Marvel. Maybe it's because of the influx of Marvel people, but there's very little difference in the atmosphere. I go into DC and I wouldn't be surprised if someone threw a paper airplane at me. That type of relaxed attitude.

I haven't been to Marvel in quite awhile, but they tell me that Marvel is starting to switch over a bit toward DC. But then I meet all my friends and they're still acting as wacky as they ever did. So, I figure Marvel can't be that normal yet. I guess, working at DC I haven't noticed a single damn difference in the way DC's run compared to how Marvel is run. Some of the DC people are a little more reserved, like Julie Schwartz, although he's probably mad as a hatter when he goes home. The offices look a little more sanitary, all the editors are in separate cubicles instead of sometimes two in one office. But for the most part, the insanity seems to be as contagious there as it was at Marvel.

DAVE: *With* The Avengers *at Marvel, and now* Teen Titans *and* JLA *at DC... you mentioned earlier that there's more interaction of characters in a group. Do you have a particular fetish for groups?*

DAVE: *You'll take anything that's got a group.*

GEORGE: Not anything. I was offered *The Defenders* — that's got a group — but *The Defenders* wasn't doing all that great. I just never agreed to do that book because the characters involved just didn't seem like group characters. I just couldn't see them in a group. The Hulk. I just couldn't see him in a group. I just couldn't see Dr. Strange in a group or Subby.

DAVE: *But that's what the Defenders was all about. A team made up of virtually all of the Marvel characters who did not belong to any of the already existing groups.*

THE BLACK ARROWS FLY!
SWAAK!
SHTAK!
CHIT!
RONIN! WHO IS IT THAT ATTACKS US?
BUT NOT ONE STRIKES ITS TARGET...THEIR DOOM-FLIGHT ARRESTED BY TWIN ARCS OF TEMPERED-STEEL...AND THE LIGHTNING FLASH OF BARE HANDS, DEADLY WEAPONS OF A MASTER IN THE MARTIAL ARTS!
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Sons of the Tiger was a strip that nobody wanted to draw because it was such a turkey feature of *The Deadly Hands of Kung fu*. Pérez took it and after doing about 15 issues Bill Mantlo and I had managed to make it the chief

Excerpt from The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu 14

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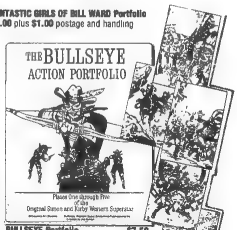

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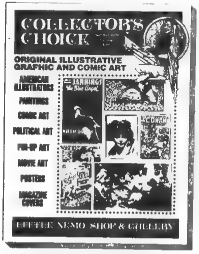

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GEORGE: Right. That's why the interplay was a little hard. The thing I like about a group is that there is a certain unity there, that makes them have that common cause. I enjoy doing characters. You know. I guess I just have a costume fetish more than anything else.

When I first went over to DC, many people figured the first book I was going to be working on was *The Legion of Superheroes*. There was talk that I would have taken *The Legion of Superheroes*, if *The Justice League* hadn't become available.

DAVE: *Do you prefer* The Justice League?

GEORGE: I prefer *The Justice League* because I am more familiar with the characters. Like in *The Avengers*, since the characters are so familiar to me, the characterization is very easy. I know who Superman is. I know who the Green Lantern is. I know who The Flash is. Even though I work on a full script on *The Justice League*, I'm allowed the freedom of choreographing them any way I wish. There's one scene where Superman is just standing in the background. The JLA has a bunch of young children with them. So they have one child eating carrots — it was some kind of underground society — on Superman's shoulder To me, Superman is basically big. He's enormous. He's chiseled out of rock, but he's very soft. He's a father figure, and I wanted to point that out. I like doing subtle touches like that Captain America standing like he's always ready to make a speech. Iron Man constantly shining as if he just came out of a car wash. The Beast, who is just a fun character to draw, because he got my insanity out on the page.

DAVE: *I always expect him to do macrame with his toes*

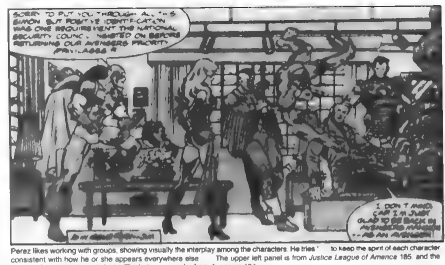
GEORGE: Yeah, that's what I wanted. I wanted him to play cards with his toes, anything. He's probably the character I most identified with. Wonder Man, the guy is constantly lost. The Vision, of whom I made a point that when I drew him into a scene, he was seldom involved in the scene. There's one scene where everyone's talking and Vision's back is turned to everyone else. He's looking out the window. Vision is introverted. He's an outsider in the group, although he's one of the few characters who was created specifically to be an Avenger.

DAVE: *I thought he was created specifically to cash in on the popularity of Mr. Spock.*

GEORGE: [laughter] Well yeah. He was one of the few characters created in the Avengers to be an Avenger. OK? I tried to do the same thing with The Batman. There was one scene where Batman was walking down the stairs. I had Batman leaning at the side of the stairs, next to the guard rail with his cape draped right over it. I try to keep the spirit of each character consistent with how he or she appears everywhere else. That is one of the reasons why those group books are harder to do for some artists. For many artists, it's just easier drawing characters in standard poses and just putting the different costumes on them. I like trying to keep the people in character. Batman is a creature of the night. Even in a group environment, I try to get that point across. I have his cape draped over him. I have him in heavy black if I can. Superman is big, tall, full of bravado. Green Lantern is slightly cosmic. The Elongated Man is basically like the Beast. He's a comic relief type of character. The women are there for pure sex, and I make no bones about it. I enjoy exotic women, and that's the way I draw them. I did that with Wanda. In particular I did that with Jan, since she constantly changed her costume and allowed me to really go fetish crazy.

DAVE: *You would have gone bananas with the new Legion costumes.*

THE LAST THING I WAS IN A BIND AS TIGHT AS THAT WAS WHEN SUPERMAN AND I FOUGHT KILLER FROST!!
PLEASE, BRUCE, CAN'T YOU BE GLAD YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED TALKING SINCE THE MIRACLE IS INTO US FREE OF THAT ICE TRAP!
IN A TRY IT'S AN UNUSUAL PHOTO OF THE JLA AND FOR THREE MINUTES OF PURE WORLD, THE REST HOUR IS A DISTANCE ADMONISHING...
THEY ARE POSED, AND THERE IS A RESTFUL OF SORTS
...I THINK THE END ONLY REALITY INTRUDES...
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.


SOON TO PUT YOU THROUGH A... THE BUNCH. BUT FOR THE MOMENT I CAN'T WAS ONE SECURITY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WANTED ON BEING RETURNING OUR ANSWERS PROMPTLY... PRIVILEGES !!
I DON'T KNOW AND CARE I'M JUST GLAD TO BE BACK IN AVENGERS MANSION ... AS AN AVENGER!
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Perez likes working with groups, showing visually the interplay among the characters. He tries to keep the spirit of each character consistent with how he or she appears everywhere else. The upper left panel is from *Justice League of America* 185, and the upper right panel is from *JLA* 194. The bottom panel is from *Avengers* 194.

GEORGE: Oh yes. I enjoy Princess Projectra's costume the most, probably because it reveals the most. And in creating the new Teen Titans, the one thing I enjoyed was the fact that of the three new characters we created, two of them were women. And one of them, Starfire, was definitely created for pure sex. The fact is she's sexy, she enjoys sex, and she makes no bones about it. She attacks Robin in the second issue. You know, really gives him one right across the month.

"...The women are there for pure sex, and I make no bones about it..."

DAVE: *What would Fredric Wertham say?*

GEORGE: [Laughter]

DAVE: *[laughter] Although I guess that would depend on how Robin reacts to the opposite sex.*

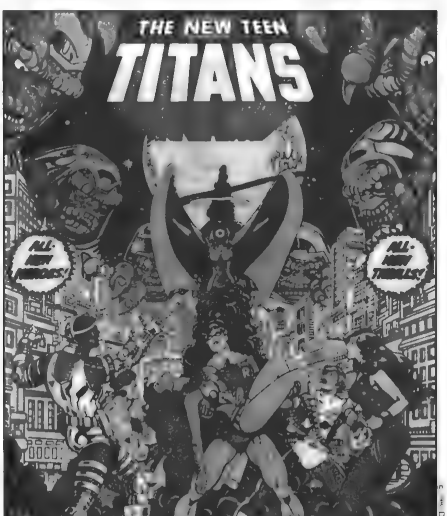
GEORGE: [laughter] The thing is, Starfire is an alien from another planet, but she can learn the language by touch. That's just the way she chooses to touch. She likes Robin because he's one of the few guys who's gutsy enough to show his legs. I hate that damn costume of Robin's, but at least we're going to have a little fun with it.

DAVE: *Does Robin have to shave his legs?*

GEORGE: I established that he doesn't have any hair on his chest, so chances are he doesn't have to shave his legs either, because he's pretty skimpy on the hair.

DAVE: *I find artists at DC very sloppy about that. In one issue, Batman will have a heavy chest of hair, and in another issue he'll be totally devoid of hair. There's no consistency.*

GEORGE: Again, artist to artist. Like, Wonder Man has a hairy chest. There's no way we're going to get around that. I mean, that man is a walking mattress. Of the Teen Titans, because they're young, obviously I don't want to make them look like gargoyles, with all this hair popping out of their bodies. Except for the Changling, who used to be known as Beast Boy. One thing that I just did was a scene at a swimming pool. It was a challenge because I tried to also make sure that the characters had different faces and different physiques. Robin is obviously a gymnast, although by comic book standards, a little bit like a high school wrestler. Kid Flash is slightly angular, his cheeks are drawn in a little bit more because he burns up calories at an enormous rate. I made the Changeling not only hairy, but because his body is green, he has a hairy green body. So I did him basically for the visuals. Also I managed to show two of the girls to their best advantage: Wondergirl and Starfire. The Raven is a mysterious character. We don't know very much about her, and she's never seen in anything other than her costume. She never actually gets involved in the action of the story. She disappears, like a Spectre character. She's a mysterious female character whose face is almost totally in shadow, yet most of the people who have seen her, consider her almost more sexy than Starfire.



The panels reproduced here are from *The New Teen Titans* 1 & 2. When Perez was faced with choosing between the *Avengers* and the *Teen Titans*, he chose the *Titans* because of the greater input he has into the book

DAVE: *Like Fleisher's Black Orchid character?*

GEORGE: Even more mysterious than that, because since Raven has this enormous cape, you almost never see her. And I play that up with heavy black shadows. She has a dark blue costume. So she's mysterious, because what you see of her looks good. But you don't know what the rest of her looks like. You don't even know if she's bald.

DAVE: *What about Speedy?*

GEORGE: Speedy's not a member of the new Teen Titans. We have already gotten hate mail on that. It sounds like almost a rerun of when the new X-Men were introduced. When they said, "What do you mean you're getting rid of some of the old members?" Particularly the Angel. He was one they really complained about, then. And the thing we get the most complaints about, and remember the mail has been rather light at the moment, has been why did we get rid of Speedy?

I CAN'T SEE, DOMED PLANET? SHADOWS SEEM TO REIGN HERE... SILENCE
I ONLY HAD TIME TO GIVE HIM YOUR LANDMARK — I MAY BE TOO LATE TO HELP
ORIGINALLY, THE YOUNG ALIEN STARES AT ROBIN, SENSING THE NAME IS NOT THE EXACT MEANING OF THE TEEN WONDER'S WORDS...
THERE.
DON'T WORRY, LITTLE ONE... I'LL FIND YOU A MOTHER THEN...
JIM DAVIS 3/26/83

HOW THERE ARE THE GIRLS— WOW...
BETTER BELIEVE IT, ARMROD...
WHEN YOU SAID YOU'D SHOW SOME TEEN TITANS, I DIDN'T EXPECT SUPER MODELS!
ARE THEY ANY MATCH FOR THE STRENGTH OF GLAND-CRUSHING MUSCLE?
WHAT'S A MATTER, CHANGELING? YOU'RE STRANGELY QUIET...
I'M PLEASED YOU CAME...
SO OF COURSE I THINK I'M THE LUCKIEST GUY IN EARTH...

Basically, we just wanted to use the characters who were definite sellers. Obviously, Robin was a carry over from Batman, Wonder Girl, a carry over from Wonder Woman and Kid Flash a carry over from The Flash. Three of the top DC sellers. We used them for commercial reasons and because their powers were the most useable. In fact, if Speedy were there, he'd interfere a bit with the weaponry of Cyborg and Cyborg's character is one we definitely want to develop. He's almost like a walking arsenal and hates being it. Changeling was put in for comic relief. He constantly appears as animals who can still speak. Of the two women, one women was done to be specifically a really sexy looking woman, and the other one done for mystery. So everyone had their role to play. Speedy just wouldn't fit in.

Kid Flash is a hero who doesn't want to be a hero. He'd prefer staying in college. So he's given a bit of an abrasive quality that was inherited from the Green Arrow Speedy character. So he provides that role. Speedy's not even valuable there.

DAVE: *Is Kid Flash still ga-ga over Wonder Girl?*

GEORGE: He is. But actually, now it's gotten to the point where he's more intrigued by Raven. Raven is someone he's just met, and for some reason he seems to be falling head over heels for a woman he scarcely knows. There's one scene after some kind of mystic encounter that Raven has, in which he runs back to his house for a change of clothing. And she's there on the bed, just lying there. She just came out of a mystic trance. The question is why she chose Kid Flash's place to be in, especially since she had already designated Robin to be the leader. There's also one scene where she appears without her cloak and we can see a very dark glimpse of the back of her head. So you can see that she has hair, but that's as much as you're going to see of her face, for the time being.

We also sexed up Wonder Girl's image a bit more. We lowered the neckline of her costume and built her up a bit more, so she looks like a 19 year old rather than a 14 year old. The Teen Titans are now in their late teens; bordering on their 20's as opposed to the original Teen Titans who were about 14 or 15 years old.

DAVE: *So no more "cool" and "groovy".*

GEORGE: No, no. Robin's going to have an identity crisis because he's getting tired of being sidekick to Batman.,Wonder Girl is finally trying to figure out who the hell she is. Kid Flash is tired of the superhero scene and wants to go to college. He's

continued on page 21

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A VIEW FROM THE UNDERGROUND

THE INNER CITY ROMANCE COMIC

by Mark Gasper

©1977 Guy Colwell

Romance is not a word often associated with the inner city. The characters in Guy Colwell's *The Inner City Romance Comic* are not romantic. They are hard, gritty and streetwise.

Ten years ago there was talk of revolution in this country. A few isolated groups had begun to arm. They believed that the American people would support overthrow of a repressive value system and a class society that exploited its poor

There is romance in that belief. It is the deluded hope of youth. Ten years later it seems almost childish. It was not childish then.

There is little romance between the characters in Colwell's inner city. They are alone in their prison cell apartments, furtively plotting their escape from the mold in which an uncaring society has cast them. Only sex provides them with any sort of release. But that release drains them, like a vampire's bite, instead of replenishing or enriching them.

Yet still they plot and scheme, consciously or unconsciously for change. There is romance in their scheming, in their hope.

Under the all-inclusive title *The Inner City Romance Comic*, Guy Colwell weaves his stories about people. Each issue is self-contained and characters rarely appear in more than one issue. The settings vary greatly, one issue revolves around a rock and roll benefit, another tells the story of a fight to keep a low-income housing project open, still another is a stream-of-consciousness look at prison life. But in each issue there is the anger and frustration inherent in an appeal for immediate change.

Colwell is a good storyteller, one of the best to emerge from the underground comic scene. He is in command of his stories throughout, letting the pictures push or pull the reader's eye along as fast or as slow as a particular sequence or scene demands. What Colwell lacks as a draftsman (his work is a bit crude), he more than compensates with his ability to combine pictures into a literate, fast-paced and compelling story.

There is a real sense of political commitment in Colwell's work. He is the most militant of the underground comics cadre. Like the main character in "Ramps" (*Inner City Romance 4*), Colwell is obsessed with political equality.

His first story, "Choices", published in 1972, deals directly with the issue of personal political commitment. James, a black ex-con recently released from prison, must choose between life on easy street as a pusher or taking part in his people's struggle for freedom and parity. As his two friends from prison cavort with three prostitutes in a wild, drug-crazed orgy, James sleeps with a warm and loving woman who questions his integrity. James must choose between personal comfort and his moral responsibilities.

It is not an easy choice.

Colwell served time (two years) at the McNeil Island Prison Camp for refusing to register for the draft in 1968. Politics is not a game to him. His ideals are too important. His beliefs come from the heart, his work, from the gut.

At times Colwell's rhetoric, like much of the Movement itself, *is* blatant, short-sighted, sensationalistic and naive. But underneath the exploitative and simplistic elements of his stories is a real compassion and caring for people and their needs. His characters do not merely shout slogans. Yes, they are beligerent and strident, but their demands are based upon the concerns born from life experience and not from a middle-class voyeurism.

There is sensitivity in Colwell's work that is rare in militant art. The scene at the end of "Radical Rock" (issue 2) when the young rebel attempts to explain to his father why "he can't love the 'man' and live by his rules" is a moving personal moment between two people caught within forces that must destroy them. America is not a nation composed of individuals in Colwell's inner city. People are not reduced to black and white cardboard representations of political images, they each have their own personal responsibilities and desires.

The weakest element in *The Inner City Romance Comic* are the capitalist villains; the police and the politicians. Like the capitalist villains of the Russian films produced after the Revolution of 1917, Colwell's police are cruel and inhuman for no apparent reason. There is no attempt made to motivate their actions, they are presented as indistinguishable "pigs": "The only good cop is a dead cop." Apparently 2 years of incarceration have destroyed Colwell's objectivity.

Revolution and the dream of class solidarity dominate Colwell's inner city. His pacifism and distrust of traditional authority are felt throughout each story. In the five year gap that separates issues 2 and 3 he reevaluated his politics. Abandoning the fantasy of an armed insurrection, he narrowed his vision to more immediate goals. There is no allegorical or apocalyptic presence in "Ramps" (issue 4) as there was in "Radical Rock". The struggle is much more focused.

During the 60's, drug experimentation was often equated with political protest. Dropping a tab of acid was reputed to open one up to different perceptions of time and place and change one's life priorities. Novels like Herman Hesse's *Siddartha* in which material wealth is rejected for a pursuit of a new spiritual and moral enlightenment became the romantic visions of the young.

Smoking a joint, like growing one's hair long, was believed to be an act of political defiance. The drug culture became the romantic symbol of a generation, frustrated by a world it found cruel and immoral.

The first uncensored art to emerge from this new "culture" the underground comix, (radio censorship of pro-drug rock lyrics was still a common practice) perpetuated the romantic image. Many early strips capitalized on the shock of casual drug use as a basis for its humor. Gilbert Shelton's *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* has become the most popular and longest-running underground comix characters by relying on this formula.

Guy Colwell sees nothing romantic in using drugs. In "Choices" the social worker warns James against pouring poison into the community. She argues that drugs sap one's resistance, and weaken one's ability to choose. Drugs, she says, perpetuate self-hatred and are a major obstacle to the cause. A pusher "might as well be working for the man with all the help he be givin' us to stay alive."

Drugs are not an answer in the inner city. The escape they offer is transitory and unfulfilling. Though they may be intellectual and emotionally stimulating, they are seen as debilitating. Habitual users are weak, they seem unaware of anything outside the womblike wonder of the tranquil saccharine quasi-reality of chemical stimulants. In "Radical Rock" a number of the "committed" are unable to help save the benefit because they are too stoned to function.

There is nothing romantic about burning out your brain.

In "Radical Rock" Colwell gives us a deeper sense of the choices involved in commitment to an ideal. James has made his "choice" and is now a militant organizer with a fairly size-

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able following. In an effort to raise funds to bail out his arrested comrades, James is promoting a rock and roll benefit. But the enemy does not want the hippies to organize the community, so masked by the night's darkness, they gun James down. The benefit's other organizers vow not to be intimidated by this threat and continue preparing for the benefit.

The violent clash between hippies and cops at a rock and roll benefit is almost apocalyptic. A war is being fought under the stars and the warrior's faces are bathed in shadows of hate. The common bond between black and white, violence and love, weak and strong, is the music. The power and energy of rock in its most basic element, uncontrolled rage, is the dominant force

"Radical Rock" is one of the best attempts at translating rock into a visual medium. Colwell structures his story to resemble the rise and fall of a rock song. All of the dialogue is in verse. The story's pace is controlled by the stretching or slowing of the rhymes to match the power and intensity of the visuals. Often the rhymes transcend time and space. They serve as sound bridges pulling the eye along to a new scene with new characters like a guitar riff or a piano chord pulls the ear along to the next verse in a rock opera.

The rhymed dialogue is sharp and terse. The slang pares the story down to its basics.

The story is broken into three parts. The first section builds to a startling crescendo which erupts in volcanic fury as the police trash the benefit with billy clubs and mace. After James' murder, the organizers need a leader and they find one in the black singer of the rock band. He urges them to fight for their freedom, for their "right to be free from the Man." His howling theme song, "Planet Earth," becomes the mobs' battle cry. The power of the song increases as the violence escalates, until it explodes amidst the carnage into a fiery paroxysm of pain and destruction.

The book's second section takes place in an apartment above the strident cacophony in the park. A middle-aged black couple (we later discover that they are the singer's parents) feel distanced from the conflict. The father, a World War II veteran, wonders why "the young 'uns" show no respect for his country and his way of life. There is an element of regret in his distrust of the Black Power movement. Regret perhaps for a life wasted pursuing outdated needs and false values.

His lover senses his unease and tries to release that tension by coercing him into bed. She can't explain the young 'uns attraction but "they got a knack to make me glad ah'm fat 'n' black." The inner city has not stolen her pride. A phone call interrupts the love making and serves as a segue to the books final section.

Their son has been arrested and he is calling his parents from the station house. Angry and frustrated, he defiantly screams into the phone that inciting a riot is only the beginning of his protest over his friend's murder. The desk sergeant yanks the phone from the youth's hand and ushers him towards his cell and another beating. But before the lead singer is touched, the "big pig" (an FBI agent) intervenes and offers him a deal. In exchange for betraying his friends and naming them home empty-handed, away from the glare of the TV cameras, all charges against him will be dropped. With blood spilling out between his bruised lips, the battered youth agrees.

He is sent out alone to address the mob of admirers, gathered outside the station. His supporters search his face for encouragement, for support. Despite his promise, he can not betray his principles. Fully aware of the consequences of his choice, he strikes up one last rendition of "Planet Earth." The mob in one collective voice bound together, by conviction and need, immediately pick up the chant. That moment is more powerful and more wrenching than the riot itself. For one moment, the dream is a reality, the people are speaking with one voice.

The end of the book is not pleasant. In the inner city, there is no second chance.

"Choices" and "Radical Rock" were written in the early 70's. A time in Colwell's own words when, "you felt drawn into things . . .

James is not attracted by the hooker's pretty arms in this condensed sequence from Choices

THAT'S SOMETHIN LET'S DON'T LET 'EM DO!
A bucket to get my BAIL. We got to have this line! Our FRIENDS will have to stay in JAIL. I've don't value de dum!
SO HOLD YO GROUND! ORGANIZE! AN GET NO BOUNCE!
WHO BE...
FAITH!!

After rejecting "easy street" James is gunned down in the gutter. Note the use of blacks highlighted by white pools of light. From "Radical Rock"

I don't know, I wanna get out our people free but it's gettin' scary now; how bout it gonna be?
We're scared as what should we do?
Does anybody know?
I suggest it makes no difference if you stay or go
THE LIGHT AND DARK EXPOSES THEMSELVES IN ENDLESS HUMAN GAMES AND FEAR, SICKLY, GIVE YOURSELF TO BLAME
AS THE MAN IS HUNTED DOWN BY HIS OWN FEAR AND MY STAND THIS SHOW IS THICK AS GOOD OF FRIENDS AND I DON'T NEED A HAND.

The hippies look for advice from the guru but he cops out. Note the encroaching blackness as the guru tries to rationalize his fear

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interconnected." There was a sense of common purpose and spirit. The movement is presented in those two stories as beginning to coalesce and unify behind a collective feeling of brotherhood.

It was 5 years before the *Inner City Romance Comic* 3 was published. During those years Colwell devoted all of his energies to his first love, painting. Colwell feels that the black and white format of underground comics has prevented him from utilizing the full scope of his talents in the books. Comics "emphasize the flat surface of the paper", while a painter, "can create a total visual image . . . with depth and atmosphere, in color."

Despite these reservations about his comics, there is a solid instinct that pervades Colwell's work. Depending upon his point of view in an individual scene or sequence, Colwell will employ one of a number of graphic techniques. Sometimes his backgrounds are reminiscent of the surreal landscapes in George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*.

Often his characters seem deathly stark against the sterile background. In one sequence in "Radical Rock", the hippies, leaderless since James' death, appeal to a guru for advice and leadership. By placing the all-white almost antiseptic "wise man" against an ever-encroaching black background, Colwell is able to subtly comment on the shallowness of the guru's verbal paradoxes.

On the preceeding page, Colwell chooses grey wash and white highlighting to capture James' vitality and strength. As he walks along the dark street, he is harshly spotlighted from above by the white pools of light washing down from San Francisco's old-fashioned street lights. The effect resembles the moody, high contrast, movie lighting style that emerged as a result of Germany's expressionistic period.

James is shot from a hidden corner, by an unknown assassin. He collapses into the gutter, under the glow of a street lamp. Slumped by the shock of lead encased rockets splattering his guts onto the street, his face is anonymous in that tight circle of light. Death has snatched his personality from him, he has evolved into a lump of flesh.

To amplify his basic theme of alienation and decay, Colwell often chooses to tell his stories with very sparse backgrounds. In "Choices", the story is told through the perceptions of three convicts that are trying to adjust to a world they are no longer comfortable in. Their unease with this unfamiliar world mirrors Colwell's simple setting. In "Inner City Romance" (the title of issue 3), Colwell focuses on prison life. The mechanical monotonous sterility of day-to-day prison existence is well suited to this distinct style. In "Ramps" the bare look of the complex reinforces the story's dominant mood of loneliness, poverty and despair.

When money became short, Colwell returned to comics with *Inner City Romance* 3. By this time he had abandoned the belief that an armed insurrection or a peaceful, Ghandi-like revolution was inevitable. "Inner City Romance" is split into three separate fantasies/dreams. One of the dreams parallels James' rise to power in "Choices." A black inmate escapes from prison and organizes a counter-guerilla group to face his fellow prisoners The "redistribution of freedom" is now regarded as an almost childish rejection of reality. The dream can only live in the fantasies of a mind idled by captivity as it promises the refuge of escape and diversion.

But death is the only possible escape from Colwell's prison. Prison is the final degradation, the final denial of humanity. There is no semblance of civilization in the inner city's prison, men are animals, locked away from even the glow of the sun and the caress of the wind.

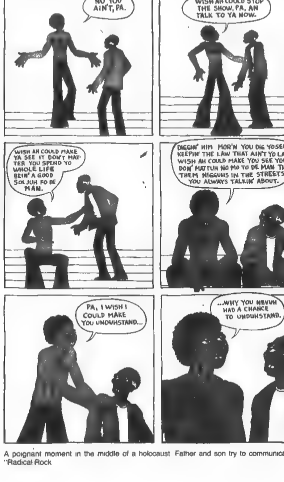
The black con's dream ends with him being blown to bits by the prison guards. Waking up, he victoriously cries that he has escaped, that he is "out." Realizing that his "triumphant" death was just a dream, he soberly prepares himself for the interminable wait behind bars.

The second fantasy is less deceptive and more dreamlike. Images bombard us as we follow a convict's escape from prison into a world of flowers, trees, birds, bubbling brooks and beautiful women. The landscape is surreal, constantly evolving from one amorphous scene into another.

After he finds a woman, they are driven into a symetrical, box-like city, that despite its diversity, is warm, loving and seductive. Dis-

IF NO NEWSPAPER OR TELEVISION SEE YOUR CLENCHED UP FIST.
WE WON'T HAVE TO EVER PUT YOUR NAME DOWN ON OUR LIST
©1972 Guy Colwell
SO, GET A JOB, SON
KEEP YOUR NOSE CLEAN.
DON'T GET IN OUR GAMES
YOU'RE BOUND TO LOSE IF YOU DON'T CHOOSE...
...A DIFFERENT ROAD FROM JAMES.

What do you do when you must take "advice" or a beating? A story in rhyme from "Radical Rock."


NO YOU AIN'T, PA.
WISH AH COULD STOP THE SHOW, PA, AN TALK TO YA NOW.
©1972 Guy Colwell
WISH AH COULD MAKE YA SEE IT DON'T MAY YER YOU SPEND YO WHOLE LIFE BEIN' A GOOD SON AN RO BE PAR.
DECIDE' HIM HOW YOU DIE YOSELF, KEEPIN' THE LAW THAT AIN'T TO LAW. WISH AH COULD MAKE YOU SEE YOU DON' RUTTUN NO PH TO BE MAN THAN THEM NIGGAHS IN THE STREETS YOU ALWAYS TALKIN' ABOUT.
PA, I WISH I COULD MAKE YOU UNDAHSTAND...
...WHY YOU NEVUH HAD A CHANCE TO UNDAHSTAND.

A poignant moment in the middle of a holocaust. Father and son try to communicate. From "Radical Rock."

covering an exit in the moving city, they flee into a lush landscape. Even their clothes are a restriction, locking their bodies away from the gentle heat of the sun. They discard these worthless trinkets from another world and journey into a primeaval forest where the animals cavort without fear. As he is about to achieve the release within her, that he has pursued for so long, the fantasy is interrupted by the grating clang of the prison bell.

The convict has not escaped, nor is he about to make love. He never left the dreary, endless repetition of captivity. His respite from the rigors of his regimented life was at best a temporary salvation.

One of Colwell's talents as a storyteller is his ability to animate a sound effect in the silent one dimensional medium of comics. Like Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner before him, Colwell imbues each sound with its own personality and character. One can feel the harsh interruption of the strident prison bell, just as one can feel the deafening, soaring crescendo of "Planet Earth" in "Radical Rock." So superb is his sense of graphic design that the sounds of the inner city are as real as its sights.

The final fantasy is closer to the reality of the prison. Half-awake, an inmate seeks refuge from the day-to-day tedium by imagining that he is the center of a bizarre orgy in the prison's shower stalls. Stumbling into the shower, he discovers three naked women, scrubbing themselves. There is an eerie desperation in the sex. The participants do not struggle for satisfaction or fulfillment, they use the pauses and pulling as an outlet for their hostility. When the women metamorphisize into men, the sudden coarseness of the sex is not disturbing. It seems a natural outgrowth from men shut away from the ecstacies of sex to use each other in a mad race for orgasm. Even an implied gang rape has its place here, it appears as natural as the inmates' short haircuts and the tall concrete walls that separate these men from their home.

Colwell offers no easy answers, he presents us prison life in the raw. In the same way that a movie audience can logically, if not emotionally, accept Lt. Willard's (Martin Sheen) murder of a wounded Vietnamese woman in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, we accept the brutality as part of a lifestyle enforced by bars, gates, barbed wire and guns. It is a normal adaptation to a cruel environment.

Guy Colwell experienced that cruelty first hand in his two years at McNeil Island. Threatened by racial hatreds, gangs and constant sexual advances, he admits that, "it will have an effect on the whole rest of (my) life."

The three part format of "Inner City Romance" closely resembles the three chapter format Colwell employed in "Radical Rock." But unlike "Radical Rock" which relied upon rhymed dialogue to serve as sound bridges, "Inner City Romance" is told almost entirely with pictures. Colwell is an excellent, though deceptively simple, storyteller (Martin Eby) he conforms to a standard six or eight rectangular panel format. So his work appears to be quite straight forward.

Despite adhering to this strict form, he continually shifts our perspective, drawing our attention to the important elements and details in a scene or sequence. While following the traditional 180° rule, Colwell is often able to communicate subtle nuances and moods without words. He uses closeups sparingly, saving them for the moments of greatest dramatic impact and for a character's most vulnerable or most revealing moments. In "Radical Rock" this rapid cutting from angle to angle (at the same time moving closer or further from the main subject) confer upon the story its break neck pace and its two major visual climaxes. Colwell is also quite adept at using a series of closeups to create an erotic quality in his love scenes.

At first glance much of Colwell's work appears pornographic. His love scenes are genuinely erotic, despite his stylistic interpretation of the human body. But each sex scene, like any other scene, has its own mood, pace and dramatic purpose. The straining bodies and the rhythmic give and take are not the most important elements in these scenes. The scenes are used to express relationships between the characters, to further the plot, to illustrate an environment or to amplify a mood.

In "Choices", Colwell contrasts the almost impersonal orgy with the warm scenes between James and the social worker. While his two friends cavort with three street hookers, James is beginning a relationship based upon an honest concern and trust. Their sex is satisfying and fulfilling, a desire born from a need to touch and reach out to someone.

Paddy and his fellow ex-con are never really satisfied, they are only momentarily satiated. Although each woman has her own needs, wants and desires, Paddy is not even remotely treated like people. To Paddy and friend, they are mere containers for them to sow their seed.

The middle-aged black couple in "Radical Rock" labor toward orgasm from two different directions. The father is using his frustration over the "young 'uns" rejection of a morality he has built his life around. The mother now too old to join her son on the barricade (for her that time has passed), is trying to ease her husband's uncertainty with his lifelong beliefs.

Sex is used in "Inner City Romance" to define prison life. The mad search for release in all three of the fantasies emphasize the frustration and danger inherent in being penned like an animal in a cage.

In 2 of the 5 anthology stories in *Inner City Romance 5*, Colwell concentrates upon a sexual encounter. Each encounter is totally different in mood and approach. In "Good For You", a young married couple or two lovers that live together, seduce each other. Their fingers cup and caress, holding the other's warmth close. Their passion is constantly broken by the sensible intrusion of a concern for birth control. The implicit understanding between the lovers requires no words, the device is more important than their momentary desire. They try to recover the mood, but the moment is forced, almost artifical. Still they appear happy as the interlude ends, for their love and trust sustains and satisfies them.

In "Jib" the cripples in the city dwellers achieve a momentary respite from the confines of the inner city. Shedding their clothes, they rush into an expansive field of clover. Their sex is playful, like a childish romp through the playground. Colwell contends that his choice of this appealing environment was, "as a contrast to the city, to heighten the feeling of being enclosed in a manmade urban situation." At the end of the interlude, their wanderlust temporarily satiated, the couple return to the inner city, prepared to face its filth and degradation.

Inner City Romance 4 appeared shortly after issue 3. Entitled "Ramps" the story is set in a dilapidated city housing project. A remnant of the promises of "the Great Society Poverty Program", the building cages its low-income tenants in box-like cubicles shut away from their neighbors and the outside world. Confined to wheelchairs, the "crips" are no poor to live in a nursing home and receive proper care. Often too weak to fend for themselves, they are dependent on the arrival of social security checks. Security is lax in the huge, walled complex and it is not unusual for a crip to find his check stolen by the junkies and other human vermin that infest the project. Deserted by their families, receiving only enough to barely sustain themselves, their struggle for survival is a lonely one.

The city's political machine has little sympathy for the plight of its elderly tenants. They continually exploit the tenant's situation to garner votes. The project is showcased as the first step towards solving the ills of poverty. Ignoring the dehumanizing and isolating qualities of the massive structure, it is matter-of-factly assumed that "big is better" and that the tenant's way of life has markedly improved since the demolition of the old neighborhoods. To prove even further progress, the political forces have recently wasted even more money by constructing a series of long ramps. The stated purpose of this addition is to make travelling "easier" for tenants confined to wheelchairs, but the real purpose is to serve as striking visual symbols of progress and innovation. Progress and innovation are two marketable features in the voting booth.

The story opens as a government representative is leading a tour through the project espousing the meaningful contributions that the wheel chair ramps have made. The main character Jib (who bears an uncanny resemblence to Guy Colwell) is angered by this glossing over of the facts, and he shouts down the government official: "Ramps shit! What about the rats! How about the broken pipes! The dope and rippin off an' muggin. People hungry and hurtin' and dyin' all alone. Miserable, sacred hidin' out, Ay, but we got ramps!" The politicos ignore his impassioned plea..it is too bitter a reality for them to deal with.

The project is a depressing place to live. Piles of garbage function as a breeding ground for cockroaches and rats. Often the heat doesn't work and the water doesn't run. The scraggly lawn is a poor contrast to the concrete face of the building.

A strange sense of isolation pervades the complex. Although the project houses an inordinate number of people, the sheer immensity of the twin dwelling prevents any real interaction. There are no terraces or porches to allow neighbors to converse or to entertain themselves by studying the fascinating ebb and flow of the street. The absence of the "street guardians" has eliminated the first defense against street crime, the witness. Everyone is now a potential victim, because they are truly alone.

The story moves along at a rapid clip, due to Colwell's rhythmic cutting style and sparse but descriptive dialogue. In a quick series of reverse angle and tracking "shots", Colwell introduces 7 diverse characters who present a clear picture of the languid pace of life in the project. A young innocent kid grabs a cigarette from a weary hustler, an old man endures a ride in his motorized wheelchair, a pusher lists his wares to an eager buyer and a dedicated social worker tries to bring comfort to a lonely old woman.

For many of the tenants, this project is the last stop in their irreversible descent to the bottom rungs of society's ladder. On another

Twelve reactions to being cramped into a boxlike cubicle in a modern urban project. From "Ramps"

THE CONCERT!
WE NEED YOU!
OH,SHIT, ARE THEY HIGH!
We can't let them trip with the pig coming by!
DON'T tell them NOW! Let's not ruin their scene
The Aries upstairs says he's got THORAZINE!

These two hippies are too incapacitated to help their friends because acid doesn't permit any controlled action. An example of Colwell's unique portrayal of a drug distorted reality, from "Radical Rock."

page, in a fine example of Colwell's instinctive visual sensitivity, he presents 12 slice-of-life portraits. Each person is locked within their own personal hell. The oppressive seclusion reinforces the despair and hopelessness they face each waking moment.

The government tour leaves the project, smug and content in the belief that their creation is a success. Jib is left alone with his pleas. Muttering to himself, he aimlessly wanders to his own apartment.

Feeling suddenly mature, the young boy carelessly discards the finished butt he had borrowed from the hustler and leaps upon his skateboard. He revels in the board's speed and dexterity. Clipping and cutting around sharp corners, he continually picks up speed, racing down the ramps' steep incline. For just a moment, the alluring sensation of speed distracts him. His attention drifts away from the path ahead as he deeply gulps the breath of freedom.

At that moment, a rat emerges from a stack of untended garbage and scurries toward him. The board, propelled by its own momentum, can not stop. It runs over the rat, sending its rider spilling over the balcony, falling down, down, towards the hard pavement, many stories below.

Colwell refuses to portray the fall from the traditional objective perspective. Instead, he chooses to show us the boy's distorted picture of his descent. The hard-edged, geometric reality of the urban landscape becomes an amorphous series of shapes: twisting, turning, stretching, snapping in a surreal kaleidoscope of exhilarating terror. Like the zany time and space distortion of an old Warner Brothers' cartoon, the boy is placed into a silent blackened nether world where he is constantly slipping towards some unknown and unknowable destiny.

Visions of a gigantic rat and the wheels of the board resemble Dick Sprang's huge props in the 50's *Batman* book. They nonchalantly threaten him with their size as he falls through them. Finally, the boy attains an inner peace and tranquility in his steady decline. The blackness totally consumes the weird shapes in his womb-like vacuum and he spies a flickering light that suddenly pulses larger and larger around him. Then there is only the instant of impact.

The boy's death is painless. His mind had shut out the shock of death until its physical arrival.

Embracing graphic techniques created by such "straight" sources as the Warner Bros. cartoons and some Disney canon, Colwell successfully presents a visual representation of the mind expanding qualitites of drugs. In "Choices" one of James' friends drops a tab of acid and becomes inexplicably enchanted by a series of small piles of dirt surrounding the stem of a house plant. As he studies the dirt more and more intently, the patterns in the dirt begin to metamorphosize. Spurred by his imagination, the scene becomes a nymphet and then a soldier in Viet Nam and then a wild, Esher-like rhythmic pattern of geometric shapes. The animated shapes are constantly moving, changing, until a large bird flies out of the darkness into a hilly, vegetation-ladden paradise.

The second fantasy in *Inner City Romance* 3 is another example of this technique. The inmates's "trip" through a bizarre Daliesque reality is a striking and memorable sequence.

Colwell also likes to integrate distorted point of view shots, with his usually objective story-

telling style. In one sequence in "Radical Rock", two hippies are too incapacitated to work for the benefit. Colwell uses two point of view shots to present the world through drug distorted eyes. In one panel the world appears topsy-turvy, like looking through a fisheye camera lens. In another panel the couple is literally "wired", coming apart at the seams because of the rushing effects of the speed inside the acid.

Colwell is consistently able to support this stream of consciousness visual style with solid, distinct, and challenging images.

After the sensationalistic death of the child, Jib is consumed by his smoldering rage. He burns down half of the building with a home-made molotov cocktail. The result is that many of the tenants are now homeless and the state refuses to help them. Disgusted and frustrated, the tenants begin to turn on Jib, blaming his irrational act for their present plight.

Undaunted by their misplaced anger, he pleads with them to unify, to fight their common enemy: the government that forces them to live like animals in a zoo, caged and hidden away from an uncaring world. In a long moving speech he tells them that they can only succeed if they are willing to become one voice, united against the pressures of an oppresive society.

The political sentiment has not changed since "Choices." It has become more pragmatic, more grass roots oriented and perhaps more willing to "work within the system." Despite the listlessness of the 70's, that idealistic, fervent voice has not been stilled. And there is something genuinely inspiring about the new maturity and sense of perspective in that voice.

Colwell's inner city has not markedly improved. But the voices raised in indignant anger over injustice, oppression and prejudice are no longer only young. They have been joined by older voices, aware for perhaps the first time of their rejection by the larger society.

LIKE IF I HAD MONEY, THE BEST TO GET A FAST BOARD, OR A GUN?
BOARD STILL NEEDS A WILL TO GET AWAY ON. SO A GUN IS... OOO.
TRIPPY THINGS?
NO, GOOD CARTOONS.
WISH I COULD HEAR.
KNOW KARATE.
WISH I COULD SURF.
© 1978 Guy Colwell

Growing up in the inner city. The skateboard has replaced the bicycle as the major transportation vehicle.

THUGS WITH TV CAMERAS
AND BORING PEOPLE
OH PEASE THE TEST! WHAT WHEN THUGS LADY CAPS TO THE WOR NOW ON THE FOOTBALLIOOS SAID WE ALREADY OWNED AND THE FURTHER TO GET A HIT. BUT SHE WAS SAID THAT THE WAS Without WORLD SAT JUPPED!
© 1978 Guy Colwell
LOOKED LIKE THEY'D GOT REAL GOOD PICTURES OF THE LADY BURNING DOWN. WE'LL SEE IT ON THE NEWS.
MAN, THEY WON'T PUT ME ON LADY KILLIN' HERSELF ON TV. THEY'LL JUST USE THE BURNT UP POLICE TYPE. TOOK TO THE HOSPITAL.
OH, LADY, GOT KILLED?
THE WORST WITCH OF THE WEST WAS REDUCED TO A PUDDLE ON THE SKYDOME... BUT DOROTHY ESCAPED WITH THE RUBY SLIPPERS.

The interkids revel in the welcome diversion of the hotel fire. Their playmate, a liquor sodden bum finds solace in their dreams and fantasies. Both selections are from "Interkids."

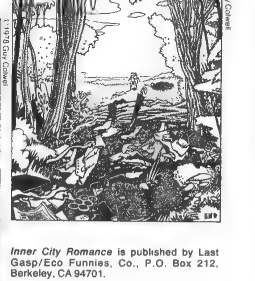
There are five separate anthology stories in *Inner City Romance* 5. "Good For You" and "All Over the Clover" are both brief sexual interludes. "Down Up" is a bizarre, slice of life story told in a new punk-influenced style. "Sex Crime" is a muddled look at rape which never really succeeds as either a social comment or a story.

The strongest piece in the book is "Interkids", a story about growing up in the inner city. The story possesses a charm and delight despite its sobering subject matter. The merry innocence of childhood glosses over the grim reality of junkies mugging children for their lunch money, a bum being left homeless, a rich kid feeling sorry that a poor kid can't afford a good skateboard, an old woman being burned to death and the macabre fascination that fire, death and destruction hold for the interkids. Colwell makes this story hopeful despite the setting.

Their bitter circumstances do not faze the children. Unspoiled unbeaten and adapted to city life, they are the real hope for the future. While the drunken bum they aid searches for escape in visions of Dorothy taking him over the rainbow, they regard their surroundings as exciting, exotic entertainment. The hotel fire is a welcome diversion, better than stoop ball, witch, Johnny-Ride-A-Pony or TV.

Guy Colwell feels restricted by the limitations of black and white comics. A painter by choice, a comics artist by profession, he struggles on in a medium he feels uncomfortable with. His work is crude and rough, but it is compelling. In 8 years I have never seen anyone thumb through a copy of any issue of *Inner City Romance* without reacting in some way to the material. His work is that strong.

Romance is not a word often associated with the inner city. To Guy Colwell, the romance is in the ever beating pulse of life and in the hope of tomorrow. And for a world boxed in brick, concrete and steel, perhaps that is the best we can aspire to. ■



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THE NEXT TIME YOU BON VOYAGE, CHARLIE BROWN, RIDE A BLACK STALLION

or

(Don't Get Locked Up in the Metro After Midnight!)

by Don McGregor

The Christmas season, the mid sixties.

The television network executives had visions of holiday programming ratings dancing in their heads in the humid summer dog days. Their tongues were hanging out, panting, lusting for the candy cane taste of Neilsen percentiles. They planned winter strategies in air conditioned offices. They passed the word down to anxious animators who had found that the profession they had loved, the profession that Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks, the Fleisher brothers, Chuck Jones and Tex Avery, among others, had nurtured, was now a dying industry left to Pink Panther cartoons. There was not a great demand for new cartoons; There was not a great demand for the incredible display of ingenious animation that had made Popeye, Mickey Mouse, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Superman, Betty Boop, and the Tasmanian Devil familiar faces to movie audiences during the thirties and forties. The holiday specials were the animators' salvation. Work was scarce.The orders for great gobs of gushy sentiment came from on high down to the animators: sentiment stained with summer sweat.

In July; the corporate decision makers liked the idea of St. Nick on display. They ordered a red nose for Rudolph as well as pastrami on rye. They asked if anybody knew how to draw cute elves. Elves are always a sure lure.

It was cutthroat time in July, spiced with the theme of "Good will to your fellow man."

"We should kill 'em with that come December!" was the collective dancing thought.

* * *

A Christmas or two after that Linus van Pelt walked out onto a barren stage, looked across the dark distances of a faceless audience; and told Charlie Brown, in a tremulous voice, what the true meaning of Christmas was.

The first time I saw the *Charlie Brown Christmas Special* and heard that wavering voice I could not speak. My throat was tight with an emotion that was unexpected, one for which I did not have immediate words. I was a part of the audience held by the child. I could see Linus through tears. Something hurt inside me, something I did not often recognize, and the tiny, frail figure stabbed by the merciless spotlight resurrected that painful awareness.

It was a human reaction that transcended a Christian holiday or any religious parameters. In that painful awareness was the turbulent voices of the middle sixties

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shouting in confusion, reacting to Vietnam, racism, sexism, militarism.

I wrote a couple of stories for Warren magazines in the early seventies that focused on a battered, idealistic cop named Turner. The first, "A Tangible Hatred," was illustrated by Rich Corben, a ten page story concerning a lethal hitchhiker on his way to a rock concert. It was the second story I had published in comics, although it wasn't the second story I had written. The first story I had written for Warren did not see print until years later. Such is the way of the publishing industry.

The last two stories concerning Turner were holiday horror stories. I had vague intentions of writing one Turner adventure a year, playing around with traditional Christmas motifs. In the first of the Christmas stories, "The Night the Snow Spilled Blood," Tom Sutton drew what remains one of my favorite pages, a twelve panel dialogue between Turner and his partner as they ride toward the scene of a murder. Enroute, Turner speaks about the *Charlie Brown Christmas Special*, and I tried to articulate some of those painful feelings I had felt when I initially viewed the perennial seasonal special. Tom Sutton created the right ambiance for that night-time probing, catching the shadows on the faces that spoke of weariness and disillusion.

"Yeah...
It's not so much what it is, Dave... it's the value it has to you...
Dave—what's wrong?
Nothing, Tom... I'm just thinking about my childhood...
Last night at supper, Dad and Mom were talking about how I'm growing up...
What you mean, Dave?
Well, it's gets to you sometimes...
Yeah, Dave... it gets to you...
We're here.

Two views of Christmas. From 1971, Police Detective Dave Turner tries to articulate his feelings about the season of joy in this excerpt from "The Night the Snow Dropped Blood." A more pensive Turner muses about his growing disillusionment, during the Christmas season of 1973 from the story "Not a Creature Was Stirring." Despite the completely different styles both pages were drawn by Tom Sutton

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We were all travelling through the night toward the unknown dawn of the seventies.

Charles Schulz began the syndicated comic strip *Peanuts* in 1950. Earlier he had drawn a strip titled *Li'l Folks* for papers in the St. Paul, Minneapolis area, but when United Feature Syndicate expressed a desire to print the strip nationally, they did not feel comfortable with the *Li'l Folks* title and it was renamed *Peanuts*. It wasn't until the sixties, though, that the postage stamp size comic reached its zenith. The Apollo 10 moon mission named its command module "Charlie Brown" and its lunar module "Snoopy." The characters' likenesses were on greeting cards, stationary, curtains, cupcake wrappers, T-shirts, bedspreads, sneakers, watches; the kind of merchandising once enjoyed by Disney and these days by *Star Wars*.

There seems little danger in losing the beginnings of the *Peanuts* strip as we have with many of the strips begun in the early nineteen hundreds since they have been reprinted in hardbound volumes, trade editions and paperbacks.

Fifteen years after the strip appeared in papers across the country, Lee Mendelson and Bill Melendez teamed with Schulz to produce the Charlie Brown television specials. In 1970, they released their first feature length animated movie, *A Boy Named Charlie Brown*. A decade passes. By its end there are over a dozen Charlie Brown television specials repeated every year. In the summer of 1980 they released their fourth film in the series, *Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown (And Don't Come Back!)*.

I wonder if the men who gave director Bill Melendez the go ahead to produce that first Christmas special had sugar plum visions that enabled them to see that the show would still produce ratings for them 15 years running. I also wonder if any of them besides William Paley still have office space in those professional buildings, or if they have fallen from grace. Television is a competitive business where careers can ascend startlingly, true, but more often they plummet, like blazing meteors suddenly gone dark and dead.

Memories are short. One bad season causes amnesia of earlier victory seasons.

This callous-hand-and-short-vision-criterion is demonstrated in all mediums, including comics.

* * *

The comic book industry has the same power politics, although the salaries the combatants ruin lives for isn't in the same league. The competitive comics company climbs over his/her fellow workers for $20,000 a year rather than $200,000; but the effects are the same, the duplicity and short memories are universal in the trek to

DECEMBER 24, 1978 11:52 PM
CHANGED? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
LADY, TAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT AND SHOVE IT!
HEY, MAYBE YOU'RE ONE TWIN?
WHAT'S THAT?
CHRISTMAS SPIRIT INSIGHT

© 1978 Warner Publishing Co.

the top.

A few years back one of the major comic book companies announced a major cutback. Many of the artists and writers who had been with the company for decades, who had spent their lives drawing comic book pages and writing them, were suddenly without jobs. One of the junior editors on the rise was quoted as saying that the cutback would not hurt the company since they only got "rid of" the people they didn't need any longer. The youth had been in the business for, maybe, four years. His attitude expresses the situation clearly: human deadwood. Throw it out! Forget the deadlines that were made when the publishers were sweating blood and wanted someone —ANYONE!— to bail them out.

They always promise they won't forget: it seems, most often, they do. And the ones who remain, who aren't a part of the executions, are afraid to speak, afraid the young ones with the cold eyes will have their jobs next.

* * *

The young ones with the cold eyes have difficulty arguing with burgeoning present day success, and while they may turn about when the popularity wanes, they are quick to bask in the fickle heat when a property is hot. *Peanuts*, during the sixties had success in beagles and hearts.

With the television shows garnering public response in the late sixties, it wasn't surprising that other mediums wanted to cash in on the *Peanuts* craze. The media had discovered something new that caught the public fancy, and they tore at it like frenzied sharks, trying to rip off the meat of popularity and make it their own. As with *Star Wars* or Miss Piggy, the Charlie Brown gang was featured on magazine covers and legitimate news programs. For awhile it was Charlie Brown mania, and it was surprising that, during those years, the quality of the strip did not deteriorate.

I think the strip has lost much of its freshness and heart recently and that the new film, *Bon Voyage*... is indicative of problems that have arisen with Snoopy and the gang, but back when all the hoopla was in full bloom Schulz maintained an inventiveness of situation and character. He did not seem distracted by the notoriety.

Few comic creators have been subjected to the exposure that Schulz has. Milton Caniff and Al Capp both had moments of public exposure, and Chester Gould has been recognized, but there are so many other men and women working in the comic strips that never had the limelight shine on their endeavors. The popularity of *Peanuts* did not cast light onto other comic creators. To the public and network executives the comics were Superman, Batman and *Peanuts*, and that it was a medium that could aspire to little else. Even the comics fanzines cater to current artists and trends. There aren't any long interviews with Leonard Starr, Dick Moores, Hal Foster, Dale Messick, Caniff or Gould. What stories they, and others, must have to tell, stories that hopefully won't be lost to all the people who love the field of comics.

In *Bon Voyage*... Charlie Brown, Linus, Peppermint Patty and Marcie become exchange students in their school program. They are going to spend two weeks in France, and the first half of the film dallies with their preparations for the trip and their flight overseas. Sally is a key word for this film, as the cartoon moves sluggishly from one set piece to the next. It always appears that something is about to happen that never quite does.

In the production notes for the movie Peppermint Patty is described as "...the tough/gentle organizer of all things... the centrifugal force who lights the fire under her friends. She spurs Charlie Brown to stretch the limits of his possibility, giving strength with her encouragement...."

The movie, which is written by Schulz, seems to have Peppermint Patty confused with Lucy van Pelt, Linus's sister. When Patty learns that Charlie Brown has also been accepted as an exchange student, she remarks disparagingly, in surrogate Lucy fashion, "Huh! I guess it's not such a great honor after all." Throughout the film Peppermint Patty seems to bolster her ego at Charlie Brown's expense. She continually accuses Charlie Brown of embarrassing them internationally. When Linus and Charlie Brown both appear at the French school without appropriate attire, Patty does not even notice that Linus has committed the same questionably grevious sin. She berates Charlie Brown, as if Schulz felt someone had to take Lucy's place as Charlie's personal critic. With the exception of Linus there is a noticeable rancor in the way all the characters treat Charlie Brown, including his dog, Snoopy. Charlie has become a cartoon Rodney Dangerfield, but the schtick after thirty years has begun to wear thin. Patty never offers encouragement, only chastisement.

It appears that Schulz is reluctant to let any of the routines that were the backbone of the strip in its earlier years fade out. During the hey-day of the strip, critics described Charlie Brown as the embodiment of every man, frustrated and humiliated but ultimately unbeaten; Snoopy was a canine Walter Mitty, refusing to settle for his lot in life as a dog; Linus was the philosopher with the compulsive need for a security blanket. Schulz may have purposefully given his comic strip off-spring a loose symbolic framework, but the enthusiastic reviews seem to have conceptually locked Charlie and the others into specifically defined roles that they cannot break out of. Schulz no longer tampers with altering aspects of their personalities. Like Lois Lane never learning Superman's identity, or Fred Sanford and Aunt May never having the fatal heart attack, Charlie Brown must continually lose every baseball game, in monumental humiliation. If Charlie is kissed by the little red-headed girl after years of rejection, somehow the event is nullified and Charlie is left yearning for affection.

There were some legitimately funny moments, some genuine laughs the first hundred or so times when Lucy begged Charlie Brown to trust her, that this time she would not lift the football when he went to kick it. Nature supplied a perverse, ridiculous sadism every March as the tree snarled, strangled or ate Charlie Brown's kite.

But after fifteen years of football treachery, malevolent kite-eating and disgrace on the baseball diamond the edge is lost, the humor gives way to a lingering taste of cruelty. For better or worse, even in childhood, life changes. Schulz has replayed the same song over and over, but the grooves in the record have worn thin so that we can see the turntable. The laughter is gone. One shrugs. We are no longer surprised. We know Lucy is going to lift the football, that Charlie Brown will have his pants knocked off by a home run ball. It was inevitable, we figure. We've seen it a thousand times before.

Schulz has allowed one character to expand, in fact to dominate the strip, but unfortunately it is a change that jars with the reality of the strip. The over exposure of the character has stripped away his charm, now he's like a President at the end of a four year term, when all the promises are tarnished and the hopes are transferred to a new party candidate. The character is Snoopy. Everyone loved Snoopy.

Remember Snoopy pretending he was a vulture, changing around on tree branches, trying to exude gloom and doom?

Snoopy's fantasies were funny. Schulz played with the physiognomy of the dog just enough to convey the outrageous mimicry. The audience never had the impression that Snoopy was a vulture or that he was a World War I flying ace, but like most of us who are not completely satisfied with who and what we are, he wanted to be more than he was.

When Snoopy was a canine Walter Mitty, he was lovable, wild, exuberant, unpredictable, but now he has lost his affinity with Mitty. Mitty could never become James Bond, could never actually accomplish what fantasy heroes do, without losing his essential connection with the rest of us.

In *Bon Voyage*..., Snoopy has first class accomodations on the plane that flies the gang to London, while the rest fly in the tourist section. Snoopy lugs along his sports gear and stops at Southfields to play

tennis at the Wimbledon Tennis Club. The announcer takes no exception to Snoopy's presence on the courts until the mutt loses his temper and decorum. Later, when they arrive in France and rent a car, Snoopy is the one who drives them along and snarls up traffic on the roadways.

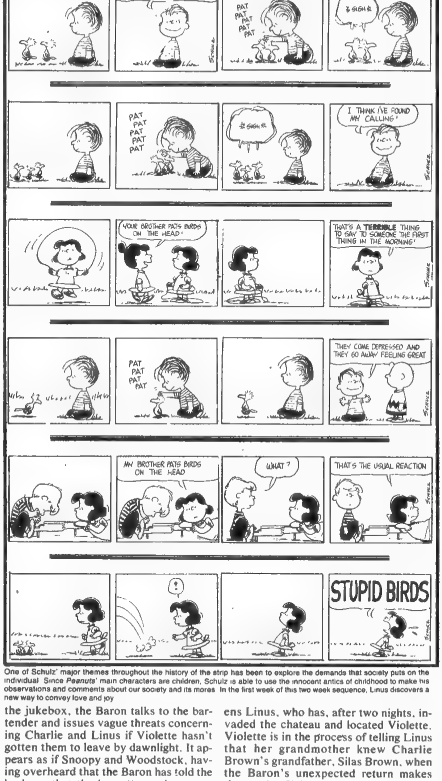
One accepts Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse and Porky Pig when they are anthropomorphized because they exist in a world of walking, talking, emotionally nutzo animals (with the exception of Mickey who has become respectably middle class). But when Snoopy, who is an addition to an essentially human cast acquires the capability to fulfill every dream and wish, his charm is not only lost, but the credibility of the strip is shaken. At one moment we have an expert beagle who is shrewd and manipulative, the next he is cursing out Charlie Brown for being late in bringing his dinner bowl.

Snoopy exhibits superiority to the kids, but primarily to Charlie, who appears to care and love for him despite the unrequited feelings. His dances of joy are now at others expense, and he does not seem the happier for it.

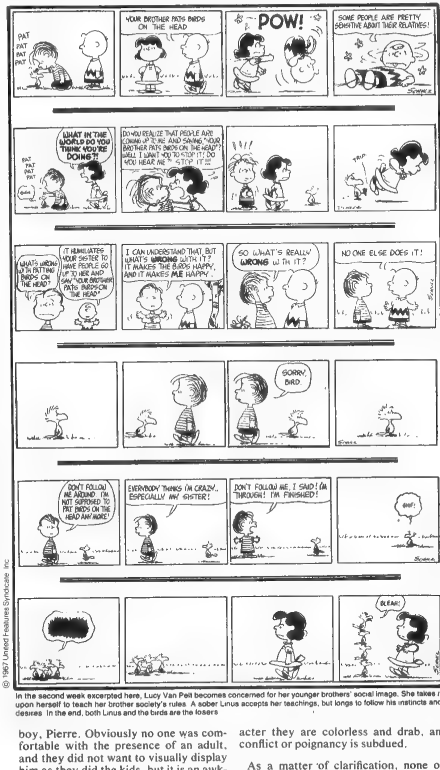
This travelogue is unusual material for a cartoon. The animators do not attempt the naturalism of the early Disney classics, nor the whacky surrealism of the Warner artists. There is a definite sense of labor and intent in the work that surpasses the quagmire that Hanna/Barbara have, almost single-handedly, doomed the Saturday morning cartoon to. Yet, while the backrounds still have some of the stylistic expressionism of the early Peanuts cartoons, there is little movement or excitement. As a travelogue the audience would have been better served with actual shots of the white cliffs of Dover, or of the French countryside passing by their windows.

Bon Voyage . . . suggests during its first half that once Charlie and the others are in France we will experience, through them, some of the similarities and differences between the two cultures. The disparities and comparisons do not occur. Rather Schulz opts for an uncharacteristic threat toward Charlie, Linus, Snoopy and Woodstock when they argive at the mysterious Chateau Mal Vaison (the "Chateau of the Bad Neighbor"). While lights sometimes flash in the windows of the apparently deserted estate with its walls and stables and castle-like main building, there is never any real feeling of menace about the place. Schulz introduces the first adult to appear in any of the *Peanuts* productions. He is the Baron of the chateau, and for reasons that are never explained, he does not like the fact that his niece, Violette, invited them to reside at their home. When Snoopy and Woodstock decide to imbibe at a nearby village bar and to grow maudlin while listening to old songs on the jukebox, the Baron talks to the bartender and issues vague threats concerning Charlie and Linus if Violette hasn't gotten them to leave by dawnlight. It appears as if Snoopy and Woodstock, having overheard that the Baron has told the barkeep that the boys "must be gotten rid of!" will race to warn them about the impending danger. Such is not the case. Before any of these situations or tensions can be brought into play, the Baron returns to the chateau and frightens Linus, who has, after two nights, invaded the chateau and located Violette. Violette is in the process of telling Linus that her grandmother knew Charlie Brown's grandfather, Silas Brown, when the Baron's unexpected return makes them take flight. A candle is upturned and the building goes aflame.

For some inexplicable reason, the Baron is always in silhouette, even when he is standing beside fully lit figures of Charlie, Patty, Marcie, and the French


I LIKE TO HEAR THEM SIGH...
PAT PAT PAT PAT
A SIGH IS
I THINK I'VE FOUND MY CALLING!
PAT PAT PAT PAT PAT
A SIGH IS
MOVE BROTHER PATS BIRDS ON THE HEAD!
THAT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SAY TO SOMEONE THE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!
PAT PAT PAT
THEY COME DEPRESSED AND THEY GO AWAY FEELING GREAT
MY BROTHER PATS BIRDS ON THE HEAD
WHAT?
THAT'S THE USUAL REACTION
STUPID BIRDS
© 1967 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

One of Schulz' major themes throughout the history of the strip has been to explore the demands that society puts on the individual. Since *Peanuts*' main characters are children, Schulz is able to use the innocent antics of childhood to make his observations and comments about our society and its mores. In the first week of this two week sequence, Linus discovers a new way to convey love and joy.


PAT PAT PAT PAT
YOUR BROTHER PATS BIRDS ON THE HEAD
POW!
SOME PEOPLE ARE PRETTY SENSITIVE ABOUT THEIR RELATIVES!
WHAT IN THE WORLD DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
DO YOU REALIZE THAT PEOPLE ARE COMING UP TO ME AND SAYING "YOUR BROTHER PATS BIRDS ON THE HEAD"?! WELL I WANT YOU TO STOP IT! DO YOU HEAR ME? STOP IT!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH PATTING BIRDS ON THE HEAD?
IT HUMILIATES YOUR SISTER TO HAVE PEOPLE GO UP TO HER AND SAY "YOUR BROTHER PATS BIRDS ON THE HEAD"
I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT? IT MAKES THE BIRDS HAPPY, AND IT MAKES ME HAPPY
SO, WHAT'S REALLY WRONG WITH IT?
NO ONE ELSE DOES IT!
SORRY, BIRD.
DON'T FOLLOW ME AROUND. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO PAT BIRDS ON THE HEAD ANYMORE!
EVERYBODY THINKS I'M CRAZY, ESPECIALLY MY SISTER!
DON'T FOLLOW ME, I SAID! I'M THROUGH! I'M FINISHED!
BARF!
BLEAH!

© 1967 United Features Syndicate, Inc.

In the second week excerpted here, Lucy Van Pelt becomes concerned for her younger brothers' social image. She takes it upon herself to teach her brother society's rules. A sober Linus accepts her teachings, but longs to follow his instincts and desires. In the end, both Linus and the birds are the losers.

boy, Pierre. Obviously no one was comfortable with the presence of an adult, and they did not want to visually display him as they did the kids, but it is an awkward handling at best.

Both Violette and Pierre have little personality. They lack the peculiarities of Charlie and the others and they haven't any peccadiloes to laugh at, no exotic compulsions and seemingly little desire other than good will to their American visitors. Without such definition of character they are colorless and drab, any conflict or poignancy is subdued.

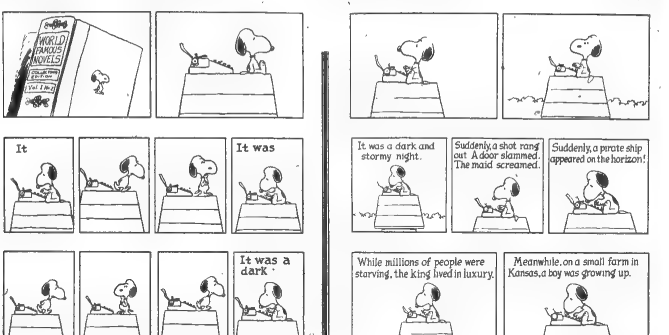
As a matter of clarification, none of these columns are intended as strictly regimented film critiques, since, unlike a newspaper which appears daily, you will probably be reading these words long after the film has passed into fame, obscurity or infamy. It is the implication of the films and the perceptions, commentaries, and impact that they have on the media that are important. They determine what we might see in the future. It is how these films relate to the world we are living in that fascinates me, and hopefully, make these pieces stand on their own. Also, since this is a magazine devoted to comics, I have tried to correlate some of the similarities and contrasts between each film and the comics industry.

With this stated, I'm going to tell you a story here, and leave the *Peanuts* cast behind for a good long while. It is a true story, one fraught with frailty, tension and absurdity, a story about a night in the Parisian subway system and one that you will hopefully find diverting, even amusing, a story that will recount some personal adventures in the city of Paris.

* * *

France has a reputation of diffidence to its tourist trade, if not even hostility. When my wife Marsha and I took the boat to Calais in 1978, we did not have the same easy entry that Charlie and Snoopy had. Considering the warnings that Great Britain has posted on the walls of the ship concerning the entry of animals onto its shores, it's also a damned surprise that Snoopy did not have as much trouble as Benji in putting his feet on ground.

When we stepped off the boat from England into the customs office in France, it was a completely different world. The barrier of a common language was immediately felt, although all of the French characters in *Bon Voyage*... speak understandable English. There was no one we could ask where to go next or which car to catch on our train. When a man (who looked like one of those burly, sullen dockside workers you always see in grade B movies where the fog is impenetrable and the danger is always a heartbeat away) came and collected all our luggage, we didn't know where he was going with it, or how far away the train was that we needed to take though France to Switzerland. We entered a building and stood in line to have our passports stamped, and when we stepped through customs control, we saw our sullen man again, standing with our luggage on a large hand truck. He nodded curtly, spun on his heel and led us through a large doorway, and we immediately saw the train platform, only five steps away on the French side of the boundary. A long train was on the tracks, hissing, and looking like a dusty version of the Orient Express. I've always loved the sound of trains, it reminds me of intrigue; Hitchcock, Fleming's *From Russia, With Love*, Bill Cosby and Robert Culp taking the "Night Train to Madrid" with Don Rickles.


WORLD FAMOUS NOVELS!
It
It was
It was a dark
It was a dark and stormy night.
GOOD WRITING IS HARD WORK!
It was a dark and stormy night.
Suddenly a shot rang out. A door slammed. The maid screamed.
Suddenly, a pirate ship appeared on the horizon!
While millions of people were starving, the king lived in luxury.
Meanwhile, on a small farm in Kansas, a boy was growing up.
Part II
IN PART TWO I TIE ALL OF THIS TOGETHER
© 1970 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
© 1970 United Features Syndicate, Inc.

Schulz approaches the toils and travails of writing this sequence excerpted from two Sunday pages from 1969. At this time Snoopy's character was just beginning to expand into his present dominate role in *Peanuts*.

The man pushed our luggage up the platform for perhaps the length of three train cars and stopped.

This was it!

Of course, we weren't certain it was the right car.

I asked him in English, "Are you sure this car goes all the way to Switzerland. See," I said in dumb American, "we're not stopping in Paris yet, and not all the cars go to Switzerland. Some of them go to Italy. Some of them disengage at Paris, and I want to make sure you have the right car." I did a lot of talking with my hands.

The sullen man merely pointed at the car, dumped our luggage off the hand truck, and held out his hand for payment. He was sweating dirt. His blue shirt was mostly the color of grease. He stood in the entrance way to the train.

We had some French currency, but we did not really understand the monetary exchange. I felt uncertain and helpless. Even talking with my hands wouldn't help much. When you went to buy something you just had to say, as benignly as possible, "Please, don't hurt me too much."

Marsha gave him some coins as I struggled to pick up the luggage. He looked at the coins and straightened on the stairs into the train. His face was angry. He began to speak, loudly, in French, shouting and pointing at the coins in his hands. He shook his head violently. He would not let us pass.

Marsha, who was eight months pregnant at the time with our son Rob Roy, patiently asked, "What's wrong?"

His voice rose. He knew a little English. "Not enough!" he screamed, lips twisting. "Not enough!" and then there was another torrent of French. words I did not comprehend but whose intent was beyond question.

The train whistled, talking of departure.

He climbed off the steps, but barred our way.

It was hot, and I was feeling pressured, and I knew of no law that said, in any country, that you had to pay extortion to men picking up your luggage. I was also starting to panic since up and down the station people were struggling with their luggage onto the train. Steam billowed into the summer air.

I went to step past the man and he stood in my way, using his size as a blockade and threat. I wanted to tell him that I would have carried the goddamn luggage myself if I'd known it was only a building length away, and that this was a helluva greeting to his country.

He started screaming something about getting the police. He knew just enough words in English to convey his meaning, perhaps even more than he let on. Marsha asked him how much he wanted. Marsha would make a beautiful diplomat.

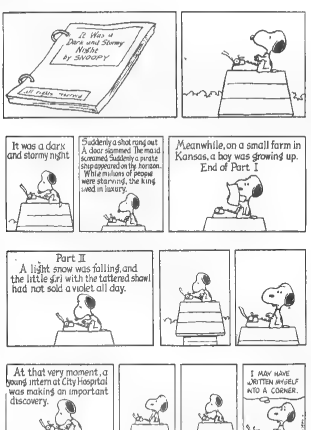
A loudspeaker spoke French words, probably announcing departure. I had a cramp in my right hand from the large suitcase handle digging into my palm, and an ache in my left armpit from the satchel slung snugly under there.

She held out some more change in her hand. With a snarl, an actual snarl, (you don't have to understand a language to recognize a snarl) he grabbed the money out of her hand and stalked away, whipping up the hand cart in his wake.

Hello, France!

And good-day and welcome to you, too.

Charlie Brown and Linus had no such problems. When they wanted breakfast, Violette mysteriously left them tasty croissants. When Marsha and I arrived in Switzerland I bought what appeared


It Was a Dark and Stormy Night
It was a dark and stormy night.
Suddenly a shot rang out. A door slammed. The maid screamed. Suddenly a pirate ship appeared on the horizon. While millions of people were starving, the king lived in luxury.
Meanwhile, on a small farm in Kansas, a boy was growing up. End of Part I
Part II
A light snow was falling, and the little girl with the tattered shawl had not sold a violet all day.
At that very moment, a young intern at City Hospital was making an important discovery.
I MAY HAVE WRITTEN MYSELF INTO A CORNER.
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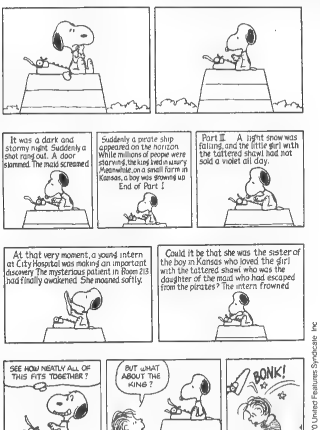
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Part II A light snow was falling, and the little girl with the tattered shawl had not sold a violet all day.
At that very moment, a young intern at City Hospital was making an important discovery. The mysterious patient in Room 218 had finally awakened. She moaned softly.
Could it be that she was the sister of the boy in Kansas who loved the girl with the tattered shawl who was the daughter of the maid who had escaped from the pirates? The intern frowned
SEE HOW NEATLY ALL OF THIS FITS TOGETHER?
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE KING?
BONK!
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The novel continues, but Snoopy discovers that writing is not an easy occupation on these two excerpted pages. Still the innocent Linus becomes the butt of Snoopy's artistic disgust

to be hot apple turnovers and turned out to be hot pork pies. There was a surprise in every bite.

A week later we had the opportunity to spend a day in Paris. We arrived in Paris at nine in the morning after a long, uncomfortable night on the train from Lausanne. The budget guide tour book detailing hotel rates in Paris was out of date, but we found a place not far from the Jardin de Tuileries and the Louvre. The money situation was tight. As we studied the Mona Lisa, we both smiled. Here we were in Paris, lovers in the city of love. We had bemused smiles because we had come to Europe as guests of the London Comic Convention, and we had stayed in Switzerland through the courtesy of my grandfather who had a chalet there, and we had a day and a night in Paris thanks to the money he had given us. The bemused smile was that we could see the Mona Lisa, and the Arc de Triomphe and would soon visit the Eiffel Tower, and yet when we returned home we did not have the faintest idea how we were going to pay the rent.

We may have been paupers, but what a holiday!

We went into one of the tiny stores and bought sandwich meats and long loaves of bread, and we sat on the grass near magnificent statues and had our lunch. Charlie Brown had difficulty getting the loaves through doorways, we had trouble opening our mouths wide enough to take a chomp into it without dislocating our jaws.

We walked through the Jardin de Tuileries. It was a bright August day, the flowers shouting in prescribed rows of brilliant color. People sailed ships in the small fountains, and it reminded me of the old *Avengers* television show for some odd reason.

We reached the Champs Elysses. The Times Square of Paris. The sidewalks were crowded with tables and chairs outside the cafes. It was cleaner than Broadway, but the place had the same tumultuous air of immediacy.

Paris is definitely a city, the way Manhattan is a city. You don't have to see all of it to recognize that. It is not crowded buildings, or skyscrapers, or cement that make a city, it has something to do with its pulse, something to do with what you sense in the air. It is exhiliarating, demeaning, joyous, harsh; a kaleidescope of sights, sounds, emotions. It is the best and the worst, from one block to the next, sometimes right beside each other. Paris had it, plus a sense of tradition that Manhattan does not have, a pride in its architecture that city officials in Manhattan have sadly ignored. Paris has a feel of history and endurance. A city of splendor and squalor.

We were saving our money for a night-time sidewalk dinner, so I went into the familiar McDonalds on the Champs Elysséé, trying not to think of the multi-million dollar ad campaigns at home that implied Big Macs were what made America great. There was a television set hitched up towards the ceiling, and at first I thought it was a monitor to make sure no one was smuggling away any precious McMuffins. It wasn't. It was a set showing previews for some movie. And there were men and women up there on the screen, in the nude, fondling each other, while a voiceover in French breathed, tense with eroticism.

Sex in McDonalds!

This would never do at home.

It's a damned good thing Charlie and Snoopy didn't walk down the Champs Elysséé. I wonder what the head of de-

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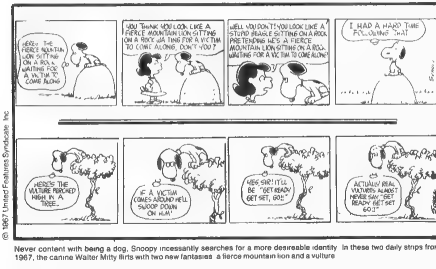
HERE'S THE FIERCE MOUNTAIN LION SITTING ON A ROCK, AWAITING HIS VICTIM TO COME ALONG, DON'T YOU?
HEH, HEH
HEH, HEH
HEH, HEH
WELL, YOU DON'T YOU LOOK LIKE A STUPID BRASS BITTING ON A ROCK PRETENDING HE'S A FIERCE MOUNTAIN LION SITTING ON A ROCK AWAITING FOR A VICTIM TO COME ALONG
I HAD A HARD TIME PULLING THAT
HERE'S THE MATURE MARSHA HIGH IN A TREE...
IF A VICTIM COMES AROUND WE'LL SWOOP DOWN ON HIM!
AWK, SHUT! I'LL BE "GET READY GET SET, GO!"
ACTUALLY REAL MATURES ALWAYS NEVER SAY "GET READY GET SET GO!"
© 1967 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Never content with being a dog, Snoopy incessantly searches for a more desireable identity. In these two daily strips from 1967, the canine Walter Mitty flirts with two new fantasies: a fierce mountain lion and a vulture

cency at McDonalds has to say about all this. I think the PTA should call him in on the carpet to explain this one.

I kind've like the idea of McDonalds getting caught with their pants down, the only added fillip that would have made it better is if one of the nude guys up there was Ronald McDonald.

We travelled the Seine at sunset on a boat that I thought served dinner. This turned out to be a false impression. We stepped onto a glamorous boat, replete with strings of lights and darkened bar area, bought our tickets and ended up escorted onto a tour boat with rows of bus seats. The sun went down with golds and reds and a flair for romance, though the seats made it difficult to pursue the idea.

We rode the elevators up the Eiffel Tower at last light. The wind vibrated the metal. The man who envisioned this giant tower must have been denied an erector set when he was a chiid and had a complex about it for the rest of his life. He compensated for it in a big way.

It was eleven o'clock before we descended from the lights of Paris, walked over the bridge and made our way along the quiet, nearly deserted quays. I was looking for a dinner boat, remembering Modesty Blaise dining elegantly with Sir Gerald Tarrant on such a floating restaurant, and other memories of Cary Grant dining Audrey Hepburn in *Charade*. The boats were all dark, empty. The water chatted against the wood pilings.

It was going toward midnight, and we were both tired and hungry. Marsha was huge the way eight month pregnant women can be, but she did not complain. She had enough enthiasm and energy for her, Rob Roy and me.

We found a sidewalk cafe that had a waiter who spoke English. He was excited when he learned we were from New York. He wanted to know about Greenwich Village. His eyes were excited as he spoke its name. It was a name that conjured fantasies for him, the way Paris conjured fantasies for people stateside.

We left the restaurant around one a.m. We had an idea of the general direction for the Champs Elysses, and we set off in search of it. The streets here resembled the streets of Greenwich Village, twisting like cow paths, doubling around, lapsing into dark stretches, bursting into a series of nightclubs with music drifting out of gay interiors.

Eventually we staggered onto the Champs Elysses. Marsha suggested we take the Metro, Paris's subway system. I was not crazy about the idea. My first impression of Paris was that it could be as unpredictable as Manhattan. I might ride the trains at 3 in the morning in Manhattan, or even strap on six-guns and play cowboys with friends at five in the morning in Central Park, but I did not do any of those things until I had some idea of the terrain, or was with people who were hip to the environment. But I had to agree with Marsha. The money had gone quickly in Paris, strange coins and bills of peacock colors disappearing from my wallet. We had only a little over a hundred dollars to last us until we got back to the States. Taking a cab would be an extravagance we would have to forego.

We walked down the steps into the tunnels. There were several folks ahead of us. The tunnel curved into the unknown. At points the tunnel split into a "v", at others, side tunnels went their own merry way, all lit flouresecently, the lights reflecting harshly off the marble walls.

A trio of drunks moved into position behind us. They laughed the kind of laughter that goes along with pulling the wings off butterflies. Their shouts echoed off the ceilings, rang ahead of us.

We couldn't understand a word of it.

When you are in a strange environment, one where you do not understand a word, except for "Oui," and that only because it is the title of a magazine, when it is also after one in the morning and your only company is a trio of drunks shouting and whooping, when you are not sure which tunnel to take or which train to catch, it does a great deal to bring out your natural reserve of paranoia. Animals have this, also, but it is then called self-preservation.

"I'm not crazy about this whole thing," I said to Marsha as we reached the platform that should take us back to the Jardin des Tuileries.

"Don't worry," Marsha answered. "The train'll come in a couple of minutes and we'll be right back to our hotel."

A train did come, on the opposite side of the tracks. The few people gathered there climbed aboard, the doors closed, and then the other side of the tunnel was as quiet as a morgue at midnight.

A woman's voice came over a loudspeaker, sounding metallic, like a phone company female computer. The words were in French, but they had been reduced to the impersonal, precise quality of a robot. The flat sounds echoed in the empty tunnels.

"Probably an advertisement," I told Marsha.

She did not look convinced.

"Maybe she's telling us when the next train is coming in," I said, looking up the platform.

It was then that I realized we were the only people on the platform except for two men standing way in the distance. That was curious, I thought. Isn't anyone else taking the train?

They pointed at us. One of the men laughed. The other shook his head. He gestured toward us again.

I looked at Marsha. She was sitting on the bench, her eyes tired. She wore a blue maternity dress with white frills. I realized that my hands were clenched into fists at my side. I tried not to look at the two men. I imagined they were talking about us. "Now that is enough of that," I scolded myself. "That truly *is* paranoia." They were probably pointing at some spot past us. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the two men dart quickly into a tunnel near them.

And then we were alone.

Even the metallic voice was gone.

The tunnels stretched: a silent tomb.

"Come on train! I thought.

"Now what were those two guys up to?" asked the paranoid gremlin in my head. "And where did they go all of a sudden? Hmm."

The silence was getting to me.

No one else walked onto the platform.

Finally I said, "Hon, I don't think a train's coming."

"Oh you're thinking that too, huh?" Marsha answered.

The Dauntless One cavorts around Europe in these four "travelogue" pictures included (L-R) are candid snapshots of the boat to Dover to Calais Marsha McGregor catching a quick nap in Paris, Don researching last issue's stuntman article in Scotland and Don in front of the grand old Eiffel Tower

"Well, it's been awhile."

"Let's see if we can find one of the booths and ask someone," Marsha suggested.

I just wanted to move out. I didn't like standing still in the empty tunnels in the early morning hours.

We retraced our steps. I wasn't about to go down the same tunnel as those two guys who'd been pointing at us had gone. We walked through the white glare, our footbeats echoing faintly. The lights killed all the shadows. There was a dead, solitary feeling in the air. We reached the entrance, and in the white lights, bouncing heartlessly off the white, sterile walls, all free from graffiti, we saw bars! Metal shafts stretched from ceiling to floor.

WE WERE LOCKED IN!

I did not lose my world-famous cool, though it nearly suffered a heat stroke.

"This," I said, trying not to let my voice quaver, "is probably not a main entrance. Probably what we have to do is find a main entrance, don't you think, Hon?" I pleaded.

"I think maybe the woman who came over the loudspeaker was not doing an advertisement," Marsha answered, as we trudged back up the hideously light tunnel. Fear trudged with us, not just faint trendrils of paranoic fear, but one of Poe's living entombment!

"What you're saying," I did not want to speak the unspeakable thought, but compulsion had its way, "is that..."

We came to the main entrance. The token booths were empty. The cement floors looked reasonably clean. That was good. We might have to sleep on them.

We walked to the stairs. Barred!

"I think maybe you're right," I said, reluctantly.

I grabbed the bars, wondering if I looked like Jimmy Cagney in all those old prison movies. I was tempted to scream, "Top of the world, Ma!!" but since we were imprisoned in subterranean labyrinths that didn't make much sense.

I stared upward, willing my corporeal form through the metal shafts. Nothing happened. Damned comic books!

I stared up the steps to freedom, now denied us, and at the top something moved. What was it?

Legs!

Legs?

Well, if there are legs then there must be people up there!! Now I could make out something more, the faint light of a newsstand at the top of the steps.

"We're saved!" I yelled.

Marsha and I began to shout. "Help!" "S.O.S." "May-day!" Anything that would bring the crowds storming down. Surely someone would say, "Don't worry now folks, we'll have you out in a jiffy!"

First one head poked down, then disappeared. It reappeared, joined by a second head. Legs began to descend down the stairs, four, ten, sixteen. They walked up to the bars, looking at us on the other side, this crazy American with the peach colored ruffled shirt, and the woman who was obviously as pregnant as one could get without delivering.

"We're locked in!" I said desperately. "We can't get out!"

"Help!" Marsha urged.

They did not understand a word, not even "help." Or maybe some of them did. They started to grin, and some of them laughed. Most of them were young guys, with the indolent sneer that transcends cultures and looks mockingly out over the world. It is a look without compassion, one of disdain. One of the guys said something in French that had the word "Americans" in it, turned to us, jerked a finger across his throat as if slicing it, and then pointed at us and laughed. The others joined in.

"But don't you see," Marsha pleaded, "we're stuck in here. Can't you get someone to help."

The mood was turning ugly. They jeered and shook on the bars, and they grabbed at us as they laughed. I pulled Marsha back from the bars, suddenly glad the barrier was there. This was not going to be the way to be rescued.

We backed away from the gate, their laughter following us. We sat down near the token booths.

"Look," I said, calmer now than I had been when we had first learned that we were locked in. "there are lots of offshoots that lead to other platforms. You stay here, and I'll run down them all. One of them must be open."

I took off down the nearest tunnel, listening to my running footfalls sound ahead of me, behind me, on top of me. I explored each branch, each locked stairwell. I thought of the two guys who had been staring down at us, and all those dark, menacing entertainment stories chased after me, the innocent couple unable to escape the half-crazed, insatiable, unbelievably ugly rapists and goon squad members.

Another old favorite reared its head. The husband and wife become trapped in some grim situation, and she is immenently due to give birth, and wouldn't you know, as soon as they're stuck in the middle of nowhere, without a pediatrician or obstetrician in sight, she has the first labor pains. Oh! Oh! The scenarios ran through my head as I ran from tunnel to tunnel, found exit after exit, all barred.

I walked back in defeat. I walked for what seemed a long time in that pitiless light. I stopped, stricken. I was lost! I was what? Lost! Lost, you idiot! Lost from running down all these tunnels thinking all those dumb thoughts, that kind of lost!

Oh heck!

In panic I began running again, now with real desperation. Something was inset into the wall up ahead, something metal and red. I stopped by it. An alarm! Hot damn! All I have to do is pull it and the calvary comes rushing in. Great!

I yanked, hard!

BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP!

The siren ripped the silence, filled every tunnel, tore into my ears. I grinned. All right calvary, do your stuff!

I took off down the corridors again, turned right, and left, and right again.

BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP!

I ran out onto a train platform and saw the token booths. Marsha was standing near them, looking confused. She saw me and the anxiety left her face. I ran to her.

"That noise . . .I didn't know what had happened to you," she said.

We held each other very tight. Her stomach seemed to pulse.

"I pulled the alarm. It's going to bring the calvary," I said, smiling idiotically, and then felt her stomach with the palms of my hands. My smile strained. "Not having any contractions, I hope."

Marsha laughed, released from her lonely vigil at the token booth.

"What makes you ask that?" She had to shout the question to be heard over the BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP!

"Oh, nothing," I replied. We do not like to be caught with our mental pants down.

Marsha had a thought. I don't know how anyone could think of anything with that infernal BA-WHAMP bouncing off every wall. The only thought I had was the faint supicion that the calvary was not going to come, that there was no one else in these tunnels, no sanitary men sweeping the cement, no maintenance folk prowling the trestles, no one but the two of us in the whole labyrinthian subway system of Paris. And now we would have to listen to BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP! all night long, tearing into our ears, leaving us reduced to gibberish by morning.

Marsha dug through her purse and came out with the tour book. She said there might be some kind of emergency number in the book that we could dial and get help. And sure enough, there was! And we found some pay phones!

Now, if only we could find the correct French change to use the damned thing! Nothing is simple when you are a stranger in a strange land.

I pulled a handful of change out of my pocket. They were different sizes, different shapes. Was a French phone-call about the same cost as one in the States? Did the smaller coins denote the lesser value? We tried the coins. Eureka! One of them worked, but it was the only coin we had of that size. If we became disconnected during the call, that was it. We were trapped!

On the other end, the phone rang. Once.

BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP!

Twice.

BA-WHAMP!

Someone picked up the phone on the other end. I signalled Marsha with a thumbs up sign. She flashed me an OK sign back.

The man must have said something like, "Hello," but you could have fooled me. I knew how to say "Bon jour," but that did not seem appropriate. My euphoria left, like a rat deserting ship. The man on the other end of the emergency phone only spoke French. I only spoke English.

I heard that old line, "What we have here is a failure to communicate," above the BA-WHAMP!

"We're in trouble," I yelled into the phone. He may not have understood the words, but the sound of panic is universal, it does not need words, only the specific crisis needs words and interpretation. I explained our situation. I could tell he didn't know what the hell I was talking about!

He asked questions. I knew they were questions, I just didn't know what it was he wanted to know.

Marsha pointed to the wall beyond the bars. The name of the station was there. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Above it was the word "sortie." Exit! It must mean exit.

"We . . .are . . .stuck . . .in the . . .Metro . . .MET . . .ROW . . .Stuck, with wife . . . wife have baby . . .BAY . . .BEE . . .stuck . . .no sortie," I thought that was good, throw a bit of French in there. "No sortie Franklin Roosevelt Metro."

I wonder what it was he thought I'd said. And why is it when the chips are down, and we can't find a common link of language, whether it is with another culture or with children, adults revert to baby talk, as if somehow it will make everything clear.

We said the same things, a dozen times or more. What else was there to say? The man had remarkable patience. He did not hang up and write off this unwanted intrusion. I was afraid that a French operator would come on and say with schooled diplomacy, "I'm sorry but your three minutes are up!" I wouldn't understand a word until the

deadline reached my ear and left Marsha and I with the BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP! which still gave no indication of losing its enthusiasm for breaking down the tunnels about our heads.

He left the phone. I did not know why. I looked at Marsha, trying to appear hopeful. She held my hand. There was the sound of a typewriter at the other end, in the free world. The receiver over there banged once, and then a new voice came on, one that could speak English!

BA-WHAMP! BA-WHAMP!

Not ten minutes after I had explained our plight again; a group of men, dressed in work uniforms appeared while the alarm kept score. The leader spoke in French and was obviously wondering how in the hell we managed to get ourselves locked up in the Metro. He sent one of the men away, obviously saying, "Get over there and shut that godawful racket off!" or some variation of such. They did not have the keys to let us out, but within minutes some policemen walked down the steps where the youths had been an hour earlier. One had some keys. Keys! Keys that he put into the lock, twisted, and the stairs beckoned us out to the night skies of Paris. The one policeman who could speak English asked us how we had managed such a trick as getting locked up. We shrugged. They all shook their heads. With those Americans, you never know, their eyes seemed to say.

The English speaking policeman told us to stand in the island in the middle of the street and a taxi would stop for us. Looking bedraggled, we crossed the lanes, and our rescuers walked away, chuckling. Tell the wife about this one.

A taxi came. I went to open the door for Marsha, tired, weary. Across the street some bon vivants, ending a night of frivolity, raced to the opposite side, flung open the back door and four of them jumped gaily inside, squealing, laughing, in short carrying on. The taxi left us standing on the island. I looked at Marsha. I shed my civilized behavior, like a rattler leaving behind a dead skin.

A second taxi pulled up to the island. Across the street, two men and two women rushed for the opposite side. I stepped out onto the street. My hands were clenched into fists. Something in my eyes made them stop. They recognized that look, it transcended language.

"Don't even think it," I said, quietly.

The man's hand released the door handle. They backed away from the loco American, figuring I suppose, that there would be a lot less grief if they waited for the next taxi.

Marsha and I took our seats in the cab, gave the driver our hotel address. The kicker was in true Charlie Brown fashion, though. The true capper was not just a repeat of what went before, but was nonetheless a fitting conclusion.

When we reached the hotel, we trundled out. The taxi pulled away. I went to the door. I grabbed the doorknob. I turned it.

And stopped!

I couldn't believe it!

They had locked up the hotel for the night!

The both of us couldn't help but laugh.

* * *

Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown... catches none of the turmoil or wonderment of being in another country, nor any of the compexities of childhood, it seems overly concious of itself as a family film and sticks to traditional exposition, never expanding on the material.

Recently Carroll Ballard made a film for Francis Ford Coppola called *The Black Stallion*. It has been playing theaters since Christmas of 1979, and it still attracts crowds. *The Black Stallion* is not just a family movie, it is a movie that uses film in an exciting fashion, tells a story in cinematic terms that are glorious, stimulating, intriguing.

The story of a boy and his horse is a familiar one but Ballard strips the fat away, hones the storyline down to its bare essentials. He virtually ignores the standards of this type of tale. He knows we have seen it before. When he must have some plot exposition, (the setups) he gives the characters a scant few, almost throwaway lines, then focuses on the minutiae of their lives. It is a totally visual film in its first half. There is only one brief scene of any length with dialogue, one that establishes the boy's father.

The father and son have been travelling on a large ship, and when it catches fire, the father is caught in the conflagration. The audience is almost unaware of the man's death, as is the boy, who is left alone to wage his own fight for survival.

The stallion is a magnificent animal, risen as if from mythic Arabian tales. He is caught in classic images normally inspired by writers, but now the power and poise of the great horses of literature have been captured on film.

One of the horse's Arabian owners grabs the boy during the chaos of fleeing passengers looking for any exit other than the sea. The Arab pulls out a knife. To kill the lad?. No! To cut away the boy's life preserver and use it for himself. It is a chilling realization, all too honest and not often caught in a family film.

The horse bolts. It leaps over the side of the ship, twisting in its primordial fear of the flames, and plunges into the roiling, volcanic-appearing waters.

The boy is swept overboard. He sinks. The tumultuous noise of burning and dying is lost in the undersea void. Desperately, much like the horse, the boy seeks the surface blindly, and bursts through back into the noise and death.

Later after the panic, after both stallion and boy have been washed ashore on a deserted beach, the memory of the father lingers, not in sacharrine syrup, not as Beaver Cleaver's dad, not as if we truly knew this man well, but as someone who worked, had dirt under his fingernails, and liked to tell stories.

The next time Charlie Brown and the gang take a trip, maybe they should hold onto the mane of the black stallion for a movement. They shouldn't mimic that style. What they should do is what Ballard did, what Schulz and Mendelson did when they first began: they should see their project with fresh eyes, with a sense of wonder, the way a child can have that surge of enthusiasm and glee.

Finally, *Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown...* does not demean animation or find all the cheap corners that Hanna-Barbara legions and their Saturday morning competitors do. But if it fails at the box office, if a sure bet like *Peanuts* bombs, then the odds are against many more feature length cartoons for a long while. Understandably, the bankers only place bets on a sure thing.

There have only been around 300 feature length cartoons in the entire history of cinema. Ralph Bakshi's *American Pop* and Dick Clark's animated version of Elton John's *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy*, among other cartoon features, are scheduled for release during the next year. But the outlook is dismal if they are as uninspired as *Bon Voyage...*

These criticisms of the current state of affairs with the Charlie Brown cast, by the way, do not in any way negate the wonderful strips Schultz has presented us in the past. Chester Gould, who throughout the forties and much of the fifties, was one of the great American story-tellers, captured the thrust and pell-mell pace of the American detective genre. When Dick Tracy went into a decline and that frenetic, bizarre stucture of plot and character was mostly abandoned, the degeneration did not negate the many years of superlative pace that Gould gave us.

Peanuts is not in an irreversible or severe decline.

When I make mention of where *Peanuts* has arrived in the 1980's, it is with some fond memories of Great Pumpkins, dog vultures and springtime dreams, and with the hope that Charlie and Schulz will once again capture its heart, humor, pathos and vision.

And every once in awhile on a few isolated days out of the year, they still do. ■

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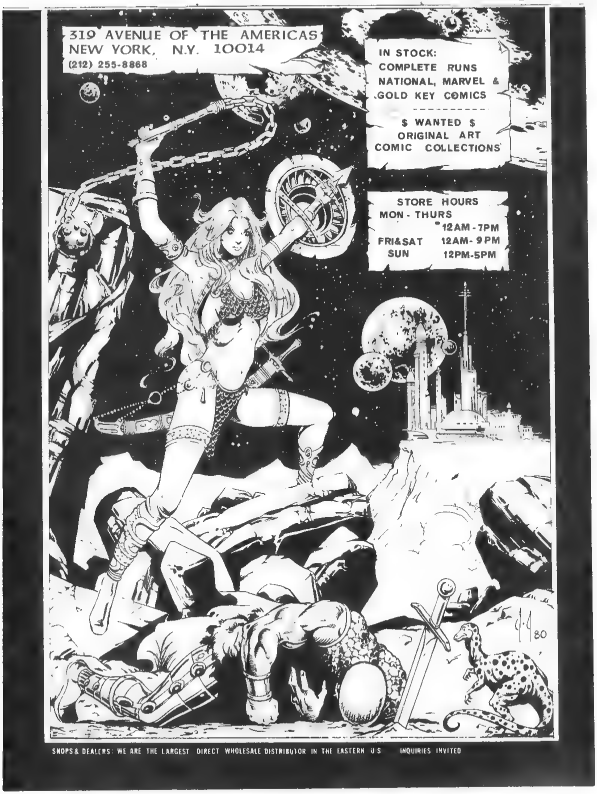

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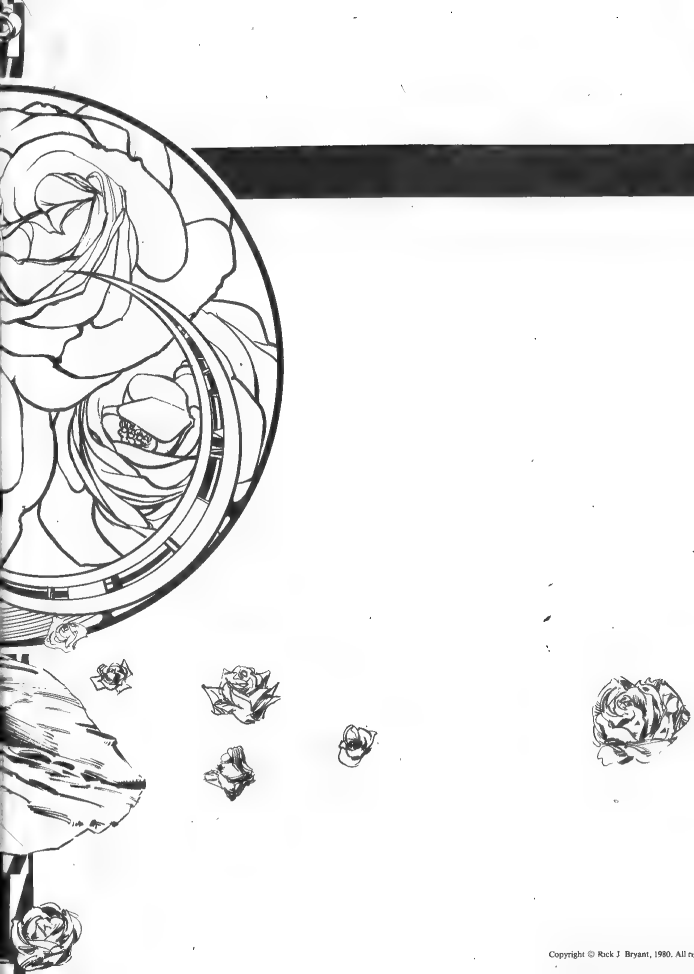

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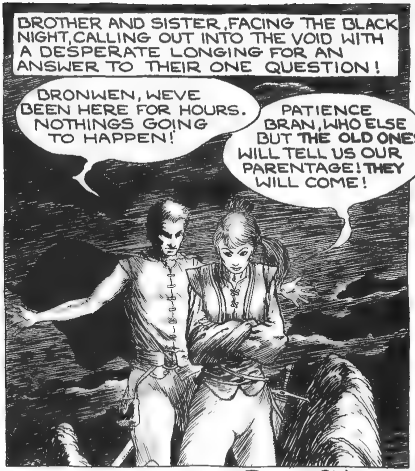
BROTHER AND SISTER, FACING THE BLACK NIGHT, CALLING OUT INTO THE VOID WITH A DESPERATE LONGING FOR AN ANSWER TO THEIR ONE QUESTION!
DRONWEN, WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR HOURS. NOTHINGS GOING TO HAPPEN!
PATIENCE BRAN, WHO ELSE BUT THE OLD ONES WILL TELL US OUR PARENTAGE! THEY WILL COME!

©C.Vess

Children of the Stars

Chapter One: The Summoning

1.

WHILE BELOW IN THE FOREST...
AH FINAR WHEN I FOUND THOSE TWO YEARS AGO WANDERING WITHOUT MEMORY I LITTLE THOUGHT THAT THEIR FATE WOULD BRING THEM HERE!
BUT DAME MELINOR YOU KNOW THAT THEIR FATE IS BOUND WITHIN THE SECRET OF THEIR PARENTAGE! THEY MUST DO THIS THING!
EVEN I WOULD FEAR TO SUMMON THE OLD ONES! I WHO KNOW THE RITUALS OF POWER! FOR ONES SO YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED AS THEY IT IS MADNESS! I FEAR FOR THEM FINAR!
THEN I WILL GO AND KEEP WATCH OVER THEM!
GOOD...
GO TO THEM!

THE DWARF QUICKLY ASCENDS THE PINNACLE...
AND ONCE AT THE TOP SECRETLY WATCHES THE TWINS.
DRONWEN STOP THIS...YOUR STRENGTH IS ALMOST GONE!
NO!
I CAN'T GIVE UP NOW! THEY ARE CLOSE... SO CLOSE!
THEN IF YOU MUST, JOIN HANDS WITH ME. MY STRENGTH WILL SUPPORT YOUR ART!
3.

THEN SUDDENLY THE SKY SPLIT OPEN...

4.

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE JAMES BURNS MEDIA REPORT

The recent success of such horror films as **Friday the 13th** and **Dressed to Kill** has prompted United Artist to distribute **He Knows You're Alone**, an Edgar Lansbury/Joseph Beruh (**The Subject Was Roses, Godspell, Squirm**) fright flick that takes place in a small-townish New York suburb. It concerns a young bride-to-be who becomes convinced that someone is watching and following her.

Lansbury and Beruh have allowed 30-year old Armand Mastroianni, an American born cousin of famed cinema star Marcello, to make his directorial debut on **He Knows You're Alone**. Despite Mastroianni's impressive string of award-winning short film's (including **Sophie and Bernie** and **Obsession**), some entrepreneurs might have considered selecting the young filmmaker too risky.

"Not at all," counters Joseph Beruh. "Armand was an extraordinary talent waiting for someone to gamble on him. Now, on the basis of our first four previews, he's being deluged by offers."

One advantage to hiring a young director is that he might imbue your movie with a **fresh** cinematic approach. One auterial decision Armand made was to go with the current terror film trend of utilizing "everyday" sites as the background for **He Knows You're Alone**'s chills.

"You can't take people on an old familiar trip to a graveyard or a haunted house and expect them to be terrified," Mastroianni insists. "They know they're supposed to be scared. When the scene of the crime is friendly

©1980 United Artists Corp

Caitlin O'Heaney struggles with a crazed killer (Tom Rolfing)

©1980 United Artists Corp

A policeman (Lewis Arlt) shoots for vengeance in **He Knows You're Alone**

©1980 United Artists Corp

When **He Knows You're Alone** that's when he **strikes** Caitlin O Heaney is obviously not dressed to kill

and familiar the audience is lulled into a false sense of security. The terror is magnified. You've got to give people a different ride—and their money's worth."

★ ☆ ★

Paramount Pictures will be bringing us a different kind of horror movie, **The Elephant Man**, produced by Jonathan Sanger for (Mel) Brooksfilms Ltd. Christopher Devore's, Eric Bergren's, and director David Lynch's screenplay concerns John Merrick (John Hurt), who was known to circus audiences throughout Victorian England as the Elephant Man. Merrick was so hideously deformed that he was condemned to a life as a sideshow freak, until he was found by the brilliant young surgeon Frederick Treves (Anthony Hopkins) and given a chance to live his last remaining years with dignity and grace.

"It's really a story of the tenderness of the unknown against the cruelty of the crowd," says John Hurt, "and that appeals to me. People are always frightened of things that they don't understand. Real ugliness is something that not many people know much about."

Hurt and Anthony Hopkins are joined in the cast by Academy and Tony Award-winning Anne Bancroft as Mrs. Kendall, "the toast of London theatre and society," and Sir John Gielgud as Mr. Carr Gomm, Chairman of the London Hospital, "whose sympathetic attitude towards John Merrick helped him gain admission to the institute."

To help capture **The Elephant Man**'s more horrorific moments, director Lynch (**Eraserhead**) hired British film veteran Freddie Francis as his cinematographer. An international cult figure among horror fans for directing such movies as **Evil of Frankenstein, Torture Garden, Dracula Has Risen From the Grave**, and **The Ghoul** (in which he first teamed with John Hurt), Francis has more recently been missing from the fright scene.

"I realized I was beginning to become totally associated with the genre and that nobody would back me to direct anything else besides horror films," says Francis. "I decided to stop directing for a while and devote myself to developing a few projects of my own. I've had a wonderful time, although it hasn't been very profitable. Meanwhile, I'm very happy that I was involved with **The Elephant Man**, but I still don't think I'll direct another **hardcore** horror movie."

Fortunately, **The Elephant Man** doesn't only center on John Merrick's deformities.

"It's also a love story and on several levels," John Hurt explains. "Firstly, between the Elephant Man and Treves, who runs into considerable professional opposition to his plans to help what, to so many of his colleagues, is just a circus freak. Then there's Merrick's curious relationship with Bytes, the man who 'owns' him and puts him on public display. Outwardly they dislike each other, but they depend on each other for their livelihood. It's an **extraordinary** story."

★ ☆ ★

Executive producer Lee Kramer's **Xanadu** is faring only moderately well at box offices, but his next film may prove more properous—a $25 million rock influenced adaptation of Marvel Comics' **The Silver Surfer**.

"I originally got turned on to **The Silver Surfer** in the 1960s when the character first appeared, but I wasn't in any way involved in this business at the time," Kramer reflects. "Once I was in a position to negotiate for the comic's film rights, I jumped at the chance to get them."

If **Surfer** fans are apprehensive that Kramer might afford the intergalactic herald the Hollywood bastardization that most other Marvel properties have suffered, there seems little need to worry.

"Stan Lee and I get along very well, but he's totally into the idea of doing **The Silver Surfer** as a rock opera. I don't think that the rock operas (**Tommy, Sgt. Pepper's**) have worked too well; there's a need for dialogue to tie a movie together. Music, however, will play a very important part in the film. We're going to make an epic picture on the scope of **2001: A Space Odyssey** with the kind of soundtrack that that film had, only using contemporary rock and roll. It's even conceivable that the Surfer might have a chant or fanfare made up of 1000 electric guitars."

"I'm really very lucky," Kramer finishes. "Doing **The Silver Surfer** has always been a dream of mine, and now it's going to be realized."

The Elephant Man swathes himself in garments to avoid the eyes of a repulsed public

Brilliant young surgeon (Anthony Hopkins) displays the Elephant Man to an incredulous group of doctors

The sideshow owner (Freddie Jones) that puts the Elephant Man on display for profit

A rare publicity still from **Thundarr**, the Saturday morning cartoon show featuring work from Steve Gerber, Jack Kirby, Alex Toth and Alfredo Alcala

Another Marvel related media presentation will be ABC-TV's and Ruby-Spears' **Thundarr**, debuting this fall on Saturday mornings. **Thundarr** takes place a few thousand years from now, on an earth which has changed almost beyond recognition. During the late twentieth century, a rogue planet split our moon into two, initiating catastrophic alterations. Man has returned to living off the land, except for a handful **fortunate** enough to live in the Citadels, mysterious kingdoms ruled by sorcerors.

Thundarr, "a combination of Charles Bronson and Clint Eastwood," is born into slavery in Tantaros, a Citadel city. Along with a Mok (mutants combining the physiology of wolves, apes, and humans) slave named Ookla, Thundarr leads a revolution against Sabian, the kingdom's wizard despot. With the timely aid of the sorceror's step-daughter, Princess Ariel, the rebellion succeeds. Thundarr, Ookla, and Ariel then depart the city to explore the outside world and avenge evil wherever they may find it.

Thundarr's story editor is Steve Gerber and its production designer is Jack Kirby with some of the characters created by comic art great Alex Toth. So, **Thundarr could** wind up being thematically closer to Marvel's unique brand of stylized fantasy than any of the company's **actual** television adaptations.

★ ☆ ★

Sean Connery is James Bond. Are you ready for Warhead?

We told you about Cubby Broccoli's and Roger Moore's next James Bond film, **For Your Eyes Only**. As we go to press, it seems quite likely that not only is there **another** James Bond picture from a **different** producer in the offing, but that it will bring back none other than the original 007, Sean Connery.

The name of the projected feature is **Warhead**, produced by Kevin McClory from a script by McClory, Len Deighton (the Harry Palmer novel series), and Connery. The film will essentially be a remake of **Thunderball**, which McClory coproduced in 1965 with the owners of the majority of the Bond stories, Broccoli and Harry Saltzman (who has since sold his interest to Cubby).

"I came to own the rights to **Thunderball** through a series of interesting circumstances," McClory told **Bondage** magazine. "In 1959, before Broccoli and Saltzman came into the picture, Ian Fleming (007's creator) and I started working on a number of original treatments and scripts for Bond movies. We finally finished the screenplay for **Thunderball** some time in 1959, but after that, I'm not really sure what happened. Ian wound up writing a novel based on the screenplay he collaborated on with myself and Jack Whittingham. Jack and I tried to stop publication of the book, because these were our ideas, really, and it led to a lawsuit. It ended in the London high courts in 1963. I was assigned all the film and TV rights to **Thunderball**. Ian also assigned to us the ten other screenplays we had worked on. They all have Bond, Felix Leiter, Q and M but not all of them have S P E C T R E. Some of them have the Mafia and other different villains.

"Anyway, by 1963 I owned the copyright to **Thunderball**. I wanted to use Sean Connery in my film, and the way for me to do that was to get together with Cubby and Harry. I agreed that all three of us would produce the picture. We worked out what our deal was to be with the understanding that ten years after the first domestic release of **Thunderball**, all of the copyrights of the screenplays of **Thunderball** would revert back to me, automatically and irrevocably. That is in the contract, signed by Saltzman and Broccoli. As for the rights to the other screenplays that Ian and I wrote, I agreed in the contract that I would not make another Bond film for ten years."

While Sean Connery hasn't actually yet signed to play Bond, he **has**—as already mentioned—cowritten **Warhead**'s script and is even interested in possibly directing the film. For the other roles, McClory would like Orson Welles (Le Cheffre in **Casino Royale**) to play Blofield and Trevor Howard to play M.

Whether we will ever get to **see Warhead**, however, is currently undetermined because when Kevin announced his plans for **Warhead** (originally titled **James Bond of the Secret Service**), Broccoli was able to postpone the movie's production.

"Broccoli knows that I have the right to make the film," McClory comments. "But you can use the law, or other methods, to delay something. They, **cannot**, however, stop **Warhead** from being made, and they know it."

★ ☆ ★

It's generally known that the SAG (Screen Actors Guild) strike has held up production on several films and television series. What isn't widespread info is that movies that have completed shooting are being prevented from finishing post-production. Actors aren't allowed to loop (rerecord) dialogue for scenes in which their lines didn't clearly register on the soundtrack. Producers are being forced to complete "dubbing" in Europe and other foreign countries. Companies that can't afford to leave America will have to wait until the strike is settled. This means that the debut of many of the new cartoon shows (requiring actor's voiceovers), will be delayed.

★ ☆ ★

Irvin Kershner (**The Empire Strikes Back**) has been hired to direct the Zanuck/Brown production of Eric Van Lustbader's best selling novel, **The Ninja**. The film's modern scenes will be lensed in New York while the sequences taking place before and directly after World War II will be shot in Japan. No starting date has yet been set.

★ ☆ ★

Milton Subotsky's Sword and Sorcery Productions has picked up options on Robert E. Howard's **Solomon Kane**, Robert Asprin's **Another Fine Myth**, and Sam J. Lundwall's **No Time for Heroes**.

★ ☆ ★

Cliff Robertson has announced plans to film a sequel to the award-winning science fiction movie, **Charly**. Robertson portrayed the title role in the 1968 feature, for which he won an Oscar. Daniel Keye's **Flower for Algernon**, the story on which the movie was based, will also serve as the inspiration for a new Broadway musical opening in mid-September entitled **Charlie and Algernon**. ■

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MARVEL GOES COMMERCIAL

In a move that may be unprecedent in the history of the comic book industry, Marvel Comics is producing a 30 second commercial advertising its characters. The commercial will consist of an introductory talk by Stan Lee combined with footage of Marvel characters animated by Marvel's new animation studio. Marvel hopes to convince specialty shop merchants to purchase local TV time to run the commercial in exchange for their participation in a poster giveaway program.

Also planned is a cooperative advertising campaign which will give retail credits to stores advertising Marvel characters. The emphasis of this program will be on print advertising.

HOWARD THE DUCK, SUPERSTAR

The sagging sales of the quarterly Howard the Duck magazine apparently has had no effect on the character's potential as a media property. A radio series is being produced and "serious discussion" is under way concerning a live-action **Howard the Duck** movie.

The radio series will consist of a number of three minute episodes that will be broadcast separately. Each episode features a story or incident that is capable of being understood independently of the other episodes. All of the episodes will combine to form a larger story.

The creator of Howard the Duck, Steve Gerber, is not involved in any of Howard's mass media merchandising.

DAZZLER 1: MARKETING EXPERIMENT

The first issue of Marvel's new comic **The Dazzler** (written by Tom DeFalco, penciled by John Romita Jr. and inked by Alfredo Alcala) will only be available in specialty shops and stores serviced by the new direct distribution network. In a marketing experiment, Curtis Circulation will not distribute **Dazzler** 1 although it will pick up the book beginning with issue 2. Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter commented that "The direct sale market is so big that we can now do a first issue thru direct sale and make more money." Although the book will not be on sale until January, 250,000 copies have been presold.

In an effort to give the book a distinctive look, a Bob Larkin cover painting has been commissioned and will be camera separated. The structure of the story will be intact although an origin sequence has been added. Since the book will not be distributed through the usual outlets, it will not carry a UPC cover symbol.

Plans are still uncertain concerning a possible Dazzler movie, although Marvel plans to pursue every viable option. Jim Shooter had originally written a treatment and Bo Derek had been signed to play the title role. But that deal fell through when Neil Bogart and Casablanca Films suffered serious financial difficulties.

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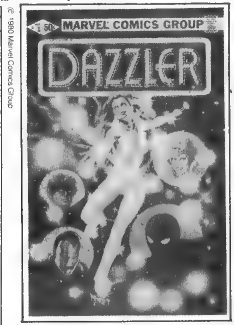

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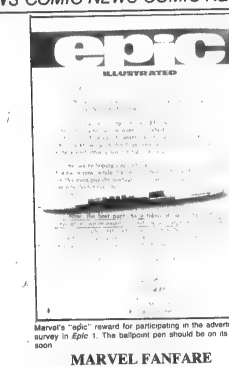


Photo by Dewei Long

Marvel's "epic" reward for participating in the advertising survey in *Epic* 1. The ballpoint pen should be on its way soon

MARVEL FANFARE

A proposed project similar to the **Marvel Universe** book is Al Milgrom's **Marvel Fanfare**. Although the book will have the same format as a regular **Marvel** comic, **Marvel Fanfare** will contain 32 pages of editorial material and no advertisements. The book is an attempt to return to the fan club atmosphere of the early Marvel Bullpen Pages. Although the book will contain no commercial advertising, it will have some house ads. **Marvel Fanfare** is being regarded as a flagship book and so each issue will contain stories by artists and writers popular with fandom. The plan is to make this as yet unscheduled book monthly.

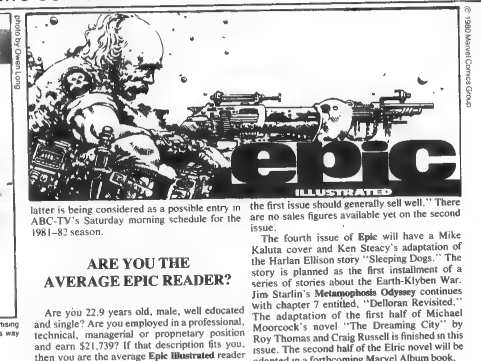
UPDATE: MARVEL ANIMATION STUDIO

Marvel Prods. Ltd., Marvel's new animation studio, will co-produce a 90 minute animated adaptation of Tchaikovsky's **Swan Lake** with the Toei Animation Co. of Japan. The project could be distributed as either a theatrical film or a TV special and may be completed by the middle of next year.

David DePatie, the former president of DePatie-Freleng Enterprises Inc., is the president of the new company. According to DePatie, the studio has been awarded a $250,000 initial development budget for the first year and he expects that about 75% of Marvel's TV and film projects will be animated.

At present the studio is producing commercials and an animated sequence for Blake Edward's forthcoming S.O.B. (DePatie-Freleng did all of the "Pink Panther" title sequences for Edwards).

Other projects being "developed" are a full-length, live-action-with-animation film based on Julie Andrews' children's book, "The Last of the Really Great Whang Doodles" and a pilot of a 60 minute "Spider-Man" cartoon series. The latter is being considered as a possible entry in ABC-TV's Saturday morning schedule for the 1981–82 season.



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ARE YOU THE AVERAGE EPIC READER?

Are you 22.9 years old, male, well educated and single? Are you employed in a professional, technical, managerial or proprietary position and earn $21,739? If that description fits you, then you are the average **Epic Illustrated** reader according to the released results of the marketing survey in **Epic 1.**

Of the 4500 reader responses received, 2,000 were "selected for tabulation on an 'every nth name' basis." The study was conducted by a market research firm, Mark Clements Research Inc. The results of the survey have been released as part of an advertising supplement appealing to mass market advertisers. To promote **Epic**, Marvel has retained two advertising consultants: Kalish, Quigley & Rosen Inc. in New York and Scott, Marshall, Sands & McGinley who have offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

According to the supplement, a regional breakdown of **Epic** sales is New England 6%, the Atlantic States 36.9%, the Central States 35.4% and the Western States 21.7%. The supplement reports that 72.8% of **Epic**'s readers are high school graduates, 57.6% are attending or have graduated from college, 53% hold "professional, scientific, managerial and proprietorship" jobs, 66.6% are between 18 and 34 years old and that 80.7% are single. Not surprisingly, survey results indicate that **Epic** has a predominantly male readership (94.3%). It should be noted that the results of such surveys, particularly in regard to income statistics, are often inaccurate because they depend upon honest responses from the readers and may be exaggerated by publishers seeking advertisers.

For helping to promote **Epic**, each participant will receive a 5", white plastic, ballpoint pen engraved with the Epic logo. The "gift" which was promised 6 months ago in **Epic 1** should be on its way to survey participants shortly.

EPIC 4 UPDATE

The sales reports on the first issue of **Epic Illustrated** have been encouraging. It is still too early for an evaluation of the project's commercial success or failure because as **Epic** editor Archie Goodwin said, "With a project like this, the first issue should generally sell well." There are no sales figures available yet on the second issue.

The fourth issue of **Epic** will have a Mike Kaluta cover and Ken Steacy's adaptation of the Harlan Ellison story "Sleeping Dogs." The story is planned as the first installment of a series of stories about the Earth-Klyben War. Jim Starlin's **Metamphosis Odyssey** continues with chapter 7 entitled, "Delloran Revisited." The adaptation of the first half of Michael Moorcock's novel "The Dreaming City" by Roy Thomas and Craig Russell is finished in this issue. The second half of the Elric novel will be adapted in a forthcoming Marvel Album book.

Roy Thomas and Tim Conrad contribute part 3 of their adaptation of Robert E. Howard's **Aimuric**. Other stories in **Epic 4** include Marc Hempel's "Elephant Grass", "Retrospect" by B. K. Taylor and James Fox, "Survivors" by Paul Kirchner and "Solar Plexus" by Rick Veitch. Also featured is a Shotaro Ishimori portfolio (one of the deans of Japanese cartooning who is celebrating his 30th anniversary as a professional cartoonist) and an article on "Science Fiction, Fantasy and the Graphic Novel" by Archie Goodwin.

MARVEL ALBUM NOTES

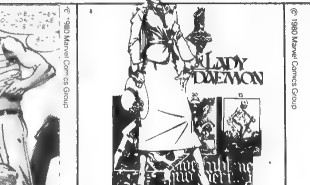
The first Marvel album book will definitely be a Marvel property (probably **X-Men 1**), although subsequent books will be a mixture of Marvel characters, licensed properties and original creations. Plans call for the production of four albums next year with the hope of eventually publishing 12 books a year. The books are targeted for the direct distribution market and will be in full color and should retail for about $3.95. It will be at least 6 months before a Marvel album book will be released.

The album books will faithfully adhere to Marvel continuity according to Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter. The official title for the new format will be the "Marvel Graphic Novel Series." One book already in the works is the Roy Thomas, P. Craig Russell adaptation of Michael Moorcock's Elric novel, "The Dreaming City." The first half of the story has appeared in the second and third issues of **Epic Illustrated**, the entire story will be presented in the album book format.

Since Marvel is no longer associated with Simon and Schuster, it is probable that Marvel will publish their graphic novels. With this goal in mind, Marvel has retained the services of a consultant to investigate the feasibility of this option.

TM & Marvel Comics Group

An excerpt from the sequence in *The Hulk* 23 being protested by the National Gay Task Force. The black white/rapist team prepare to assault a dazed Bruce Banner in the YMCA showers. Art by John Buscema and Alfredo Alcala.



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Michael Golden's **Lady Daemon** originally planned for **Marvel Preview** 24 will now appear in #25.

HULK OFFENDS GAYS

The National Gay Task Force is lodging a formal protest against a story that appeared in the **Hulk** magazine. The story, entitled "A Very Personal Hell", was written by Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter and was the featured story in **Hulk** 23.

In the story the Hulk and his alter ego Bruce Banner are stranded in New York City and they encounter a number of desperate situations. Banner's personal hell occurs when two men, implicitly gay, attack him in a YMCA shower with the intent of raping him. Left alone with one of his attackers, Banner convinces him that he should be let go before he (Banner) changes into the Hulk. The hood, who wears a hoop earring, is intimidated by Banner's threat and allows him to escape. His cohort is quite upset at the escape and berates his friend for being so easily taken in. The hood replies, "You mean...he was foolin' me? Oh, Pith!"

Tom Burrows, the National Gay Task Force representative coordinating the campaign objects to the "portrayal of an attempted homosexual rape in a comic book (intended) for children and youth." Burrows forwarded two letters written by Lucia Valeska and Charles F. Brydon. In a letter to the **Hulk** magazine, the writers condemn "the negative portrayal of gay people in the absence of any positive portrayals in your comics...We also protest your portrayal of the false stereotype, of gay people as rapists and as lisping cowards. For every gay person that is a villain, there are hundreds, even thousands of heroes." The second letter, addressed to the Comics Code Authority, requests that the Code, "require positive portrayals of gay men and lesbians in the same way that they encourage the positive portrayal of other minority groups." The letter also calls for a revision of the code to allow for the portrayal of homosexuals in code approved comics.

Marvel has only received four letters to date about the story. A representative sample will be printed on the **Hulk** letters page in an effort to balance Marvel's treatment of the issue.

Shooter defends the story because, "it was based upon a real experience", in which the potential victim also escaped. He maintains that there are several villainous people in the story in addition to the two rapists, including a narcissistic and overbearing mother and he "certainly wasn't trying to condemn motherhood."

Shooter says that he was surprised by the protest but that he, "has no objection to portraying gay people where the demands of the story is met", particularly in the offset magazines. According to Shooter, Stan Lee has read the story and feels that "it's a fine story." When asked in retrospective if he would alter the story in any way, Shooter said, "I would take the word 'pith' out of it. It was intended as a joke and was probably a mistake."

HULK MAGAZINE GOES B&W

The Hulk magazine is reverting back to its original black and white format beginning with issue 24. The reason for the change was a combination of declining sales and an enormous increase in printing costs. After considering a number of options including a price increase, it was decided to return to the old format. The Dominick Fortune strip will remain as a color insert until the conclusion of its six issue run in **Hulk 26**.

TALES OF ASGARD REVIVED

Thor scripters Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio are reviving the **Tales of Asgard** series as a backup feature in **Thor**. Unlike the original series by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the new **Tales of Asgard** will be set in the present. Each story will be divided into three chapters and will tie in with the lead feature. The first story stars a renewed Balder and Karnilla. It will be followed by a tale featuring Loki and his wife Sigyn. Keith Pollard will handle the penciling chores and no inker has been assigned to the series as of yet.

Gruenwald and Macchio plan to return Thor to Earth for at least a year. Loki incidently will no longer be a major Thor villain as a return to his original role as the God of Mischief is planned.

DENNIS THE MENACE AT MARVEL?

Marvel Comics is negotiating with the syndicate that controls the rights to **Dennis the Menace** to publish a Dennis the Menace comic book. The traditional creative team of Fred Tool (*writer*) and Hank Ketcham (artist) would be kept in the Marvel version. However the emphasis of the book would shift from the travelogue feel of the current strip to the original concept of Dennis as a real "menace"...

NOTES

Frank Miller has not officially been assigned as **Daredevil**'s writer although he has done a number of plots for the book...Archie Goodwin may be writing another daily comic strip in addition to the Sunday **Tarzan** strip...John Byrne is the regular writer on **The Fantastic Four**...The Benny Hill magazine is still on hold as Marvel is trying to convince Benny Hill's representatives that Marvel would not produce it as a "little children's book"...According to Jim Shooter, 30% of Marvel's sales come from the direct distribution (fan) outlets...**Daredevil** will go monthly with issue 170 and **Power Man/Iron Fist** with issue 68...Aunt May will be engaged in **Peter Parker** 50...No creative team has been set on **The Avengers** Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Dave Cockrum are working on fill-in issues...**Captain America** 255 (the 40th Anniversary issue) will be reproduced from John Byrne's original pencils...**The Defenders** creative team will be Mark DeMatteis, Don Perlin and Pablo Marcos...Roger Stern is taking over **Dr. Strange** with issue 46. Rom is a future guest star and most of the X-Men will make an appearance...**Ka-Zar** I is scheduled for a January release. Bruce Jones is writing the book, with art by Brent Anderson and Carlos Garzon...Marty Pasko is the regular writer on **Star Trek** and Mark DeMatteis' first **Hulk** magazine script will be in issue 26...Upcoming **Ghost Rider** villains will be the Orb, Tatterdemalian and a new character "The Apparition"..."Enigma" (formerly "Paradox") by Bill Mantlo and Val Mayerik will appear in **Marvel Preview** 24. The all-woman **Preview** issue originally intended for **Preview** 24 will appear in issue 25...Roberta McKenzie and Larry Hama have done a fill-in **Man Thing** story. It will appear in issue 9...Ralph Bakshi's **American Pop** may be adapted for a future Marvel Super Special...Steve Skeates and Trina Robbins are collaborating on a satire on the Rock 'n' Roll industry for **Crazy** 70...Underground artist Howard Cruz has contributed "How To Shape Up Your Flab" to **Crazy** 71...Klaus Janson is inking Bill Sienkiewicz on **Moon Knight** beginning with issue 4. Frank Springer will ink **Moon Knight** 2 & 3...Captain America will be the featured guest star in Tom DeFalco's first **Team Up** (103)...A female Banshee character will be introduced in **Spider Woman**, written by Chris Claremont...**Marvel Superheroes** which features Hulk reprints has been upped to monthly status beginning with issue 96...■

GIORDANO RETURNS AS DC EDITOR

After a long hiatus, Dick Giordano is once again an editor at DC. He will inherit the entire Batman line (**Batman**, **Detective** and **Brave & the Bold**) and has also been assigned to edit the newly revived **All-Star Comics**. Both **Batman** and **All-Star** will be written by Roy Thomas.

Previously, Giordano had edited such titles as **Blue Beetle**, **Judomaster**, **The Phantom** and **Sarge Steel, Secret Agent** for Charlton Comics in the mid 60's. In the latter portion of the 60's he moved over to DC where he edited, among others, the original **Teen Titans**, **Aquaman**, **The Hawk and the Dove** and **The Creeper**. Giordano also brought most of his creative staff along with him when he moved to DC. Accompanying Giordano was Jim Aparo, Sergius O'Shaunnessey (Denny O'Neil), Frank McLaughlin and Steve Skeates. Although his books did not sell particulary well, Giordano has always been a fan favorite. Many of his former titles are still highly regarded by fandom.

Giordano left DC in the early 70's to help form Continuity Associates (a commercial art studio), with Neal Adams. Since leaving DC, Giordano has devoted most of his time to commercial projects, while occasionally freelancing (with the aid of assistants) for the major companies. Highly regarded as both a penciler and an inker, Giordano joins other DC artist-editors Russ Heath and Joe Orlando.

DC ALTERS COMMAND

To make room for Dick Giordano, Editorial Coordinator Paul Levitz is being promoted to Manager of Business Affairs. Giordano will inherit Levitz' previous creative responsibilities as Levitz will concentrate upon DC's special projects.

Joe Orlando, formerly DC's Managing Editor, had been promoted to a new title, Editorial Director. His duties will essentially remain the same, the promotion is regarded as a recognition for the increasing role he is playing in DC policy.

THOMAS: A NEW S&S CHARACTER?

Recent Marvel emigrant Roy Thomas is creating a new sword & sorcery character for DC. How much this character will resemble the comic book adaptation of Robert E. Howard's **Conan**, which Thomas wrote at Marvel for almost 10 years, is not known at this time. No editor has been assigned to the book, although either new editor Dick Giordano or Len Wein will probably assume that role.

Another of Thomas' projects will be the revival of **All-Star Comics**, one of his favorite golden-age titles. As yet no artist has been set for the series, but Giordano will edit **All-Star**. Thomas has also been assigned another Giordano-edited title, the Batman strip in **Batman**. Rumors persist that Thomas will write the DC handled Marvel-DC teamups, but DC spokesman Jack Harris says "that no final decision has been reached."

UPDATE: DC-MARVEL TEAM-UPS

As a result of the success of the first Spider-Man vs. Superman special four more DC-Marvel annual teamups have been planned. Each story will be released in two formats: a 64 page Treasury edition and a 160 page paperback, published by Warner Books. The first story which will reunite Superman and Spider-Man and guest-star Wonder Woman and the Hulk is a Marvel project. The book is being written by Jim Shooter, drawn by John Buscema and inked by Joe Sinnott. It has been delayed and is now slated for a February release because of the longer lead time required by Warner Books.

The second book featuring Batman and the Hulk will be a DC production. Len Wein will write the story, with art by Jose Luis Garcia Lopez and Dick Giordano.

Marvel will produce the third book in which the X-Men and the Legion of Superheroes join forces. Chris Claremont and Dave Cockrum have been assigned to the book.

The fourth book will team the Justice League of America and the Avengers. The book's artist and writer has not been announced although there is speculation that Roy Thomas and George Perez may be DC's choices.

UPDATE: THE BATMAN LINE

The 4 part Marv Wolfman Batman story, reported last issue, will begin with "Fallout" in **Batman** 333. Batman and Robin will be teamed as they pursue Talia across the globe. Irv Novick and Frank McLaughlin will handle the art chores on all 4 chapters.

Don Newton is working on a 2 part Batman adventure, written by Gerry Conway, that will reveal the backgrounds of Alfred the butler and Lucius Fox. Slated to appear in **Detective Comics**, the story will revolve around an investigation into the identity of the person who killed Mlle. Marie.

Carmine Infantino is penciling **Brave & Bold** 172, a fill-in issue which guest stars Firestorm. Gerry Conway has written the story and Steve Mitchell has been assigned as inker. A future 2 part story in **Brave & Bold** teams Batman with Green Lantern and the Guardians of the Universe.

BACKUP NEWS

No major changes from the lineup reported last issue have been announced although The Catwoman is featured in a solo adventure in the back pages of **Batman** 332. Power Girl joins the Huntress in her battle against The Thinker in a future Paul Levitz, Joe Staton, Steve Mitchell story.

This month marks the second installment of DC's three new horror/mystery series. Dr. Thirteen will encounter the Spectre in a story written by Paul Kupperberg, with art by Mike Adams, and Tex Blaisdell. Finally, a new penciler will soon take over the Johnny Peril strip in **Unexpected**. The current "Quest of the Seven Seas" saga will soon re-introduce Heather Storm who first appeared in issue 200.

LEGION NEWS

Blok, a former Legion foe, will become a new member of the Legion, the first in a while. Braniac 5 will be found guilty of murder and be expelled from the Legion. Writer Gerry Conway plans some new developments with Ultra Boy and future Legion member Reflecto. Steve Ditko and Frank Ghiaramonte will fill-in for a pair of issues while regular penciler Jimmy Janes finishes the **Secrets of the Legion** . . . mini-series.

THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE
THE FLASH
SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH FIRESTORM!
THE NUCLEAR MAN!
HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW MACHINE, FLASH?
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW I LIKE IT!
FROM THE PAGES OF WORLD'S FINEST!

INFANTINO/ANDERSON REUNITED

One of the most popular art teams of the 60's, Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson, are collaborating on an 8 page Adam Strange story. The story, written by Laurie Sutton, will appear as a backup in **Green Lantern** 137.

JONAH HEX GETS MARRIED

Wedding bells toll for Jonah Hex as he decides to hang up his six-guns and settle down in **Jonah Hex** 45. The aging bounty hunter will marry Mei Ling, in "Blood Wedding", a story written by Michael Fleisher, penciled by Dick Ayers and inked by Tony DeZuniga. Apparently this storyline will continue for the indeterminate future, as issue 46 entitled "Death in the Grass," is about the prejudice Jonah encounters over his Asian wife.

Currently editor Ross Andru is preparing some feature pages for **Jonah Hex**. Andru will pencil and ink the pages from scripts written by Bob Rozakis.

NOTES

Dave Cockrum is slated to draw an upcoming "War That Time Forgot" story for **Weird War Tales**. Walt Simonson is also preparing a story . . . Curt Swan is pencilling a fill-in story for **The New Teen Titans**. The story explores the background and origin of Raven and will appear in issue 5 . . . The 100th issue of **Weird War** will feature the Creature Commandos in a 25 page story . . . The **I, Vampire** series by J. M. DeMatteis and Tom Sutton will debut in **House of Mystery** 290 . . . Bob Smith is the regular inker on **Warlord** . . . ■

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THE INDEPENDENTS

Heavy Metal s Oct 1980 back cover by Jim Cherry

HEAVY METAL

Heavy Metal publisher and founder Len Mogel, is the magazine's new editor. Ted White has left the magazine. According to Mogel, "(White) will be consulting with us and is working on a couple of novels." White's major contribution to the magazine, the regular columns (Lou Stathis' **Maznick**, Jay Kinney's **Comix**, Bhob Stewart's **Flix** etc.) will be dropped with the January issue, although Mogel may commission some guest columns on an irregular basis. The reason given for this change is that it was felt that the **Heavy Metal** audience "appreciate graphics rather than columns." Although **Heavy Metal** has severed its ties with **Metal Hurlant**, the magazine will continue to use a mix of European material from France, Spain and England combined with selected American material.

The **Heavy Metal** movie is now in full production and is being animated in Montreal, Ottawa and London with a projected release date of August 1981. The movie is a co-production of Mogel and Ivan Reitman (producer of **Animal House** and director of **Meatballs**). Entitled **Heavy Metal**, the film will be directed by Gerry Potterton who has directed numerous animated productions including **The Happy Prince**, **The Remarkable Rocket** and **Pinter People**.

The film will consist of seven animated segments, each of which will be backed by original rock music composed and performed by a different international rock art. The seven stories will be tied together by a central theme. Four of the stories have already appeared in **Heavy Metal** ("Captain Sternn" by Berni Wrightson, "So Beautiful and So Dangerous" by Angus McKie, "Den" by Richard Corben and "Soft Landing" by Tom Warkentin. One of the 3 new stories was written by Dan O'Bannon (the screenwriter of **Alien**). Len Blum and Daniel Goldberg, Canadian Academy Award winners for **Meatballs**, will write the continuity and basic screenplay. Bob Ezrin (who produced the Pink Floyd album **The Wall**, and has also produced albums for Roberta Flack, Alice Cooper, Lou Reed, Aerosmith and Kiss) has been hired to produce the movie's original rock music and to co-ordinate the selection of music. Elmer Bernstein will score the film. He has received 11 Academy Award nominations and won an Oscar for his work on **Thoroughly Modern Millie**.

Plans for publishing an adventure magazine as a companion to **Heavy Metal** have been postponed because of the time demands of the **Heavy Metal** movie.

The December issue of **Heavy Metal** will contain an excerpt from Jeff Jones' new book **Yesterday's Lilly** and a new story by the Shooten brothers. Also in the December issue is the beginning of Crepax's "Valentino" and an interview with Crepax.

Upcoming in the November **Heavy Metal** is another story by Canadian artist Martin Springherd. **Heavy Metal** will soon begin serializing Richard Corben's visual adaptation of Robert E. Howard's fantasy novel **Bloodstar**.

©1980 Heavy Metal
The October **Heavy Metal** Rock issue features the return of Spain's legendary **Trashman** and a **Low Rocky** adventure by He
©1980 Heavy Metal
©1980 Heavy Metal
POLF
I GOTTA TAKE HIM ALIVE IF I WANTA FIND OUT WHERE HE HID THAT GOLL RELOM. BUT I CAN'T GET HIM DOWN FROM THERE UNLESS

© 1980 NATIONAL LAMPOON

D. KENNEY 1947-1980

Douglas Kenney, multi-talented humorist-screenwriter-producer, lost his life in a tragic hiking accident in early September. Kenney was co-founder of the *National Lampoon*, had co-authored the screenplays for *National Lampoon's Animal House* and *Caddyshack*, served as producer on *The Ladder*, and was to co-produce *Modern Problems* for 20th Century Fox this fall.

He had been vacationing on the island of Maui, Hawaii, with Katherine Walker, Chevy Chase and Alan Greisman (Kenney's partner in Three Wheel Productions, an independent production company based at Fox). During a side-trip to the island of Kauai, Kenney climbed over a mountainside railing to explore on his own. He fell 50 feet to his death when the footpath beneath him gave way.

Friends were shocked by the sudden, unexpected accident. A distraught Michael O'Donoghue is reported to have retreated into black humor: "Too bad he wasn't shaking hands with Chevy when it happened." ■

QUESTAR

SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY ADVENTURE

Newcomer John Nubbins and Mike Grell (**Warlord**) will debut as the new creative team on **Just Imagine: Jeanie** in **Questar 10**. Grell is the first professional artist to work on the strip since Forrest J Ackerman created **Just Imagine: Jeanie** in **Questar 4**. Nubbins plans to retain the **Perils of Pauline** premise while unveiling a sub-plot which will tie up the strip's loose ends.

In a related move, publishers Bill Wilson and Bob Michelucci announced that Marc Hempel sue is a prose story of "The Aardvarkian Age" is set to do a full-color strip which will appear in by Michael Loubert. the December issue of **Questar**.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESS

Issue 19 of **Cerebus the Aardvark** is titled "She-Devil in the Shadows" and features the return of Sophia the Barbarian. Also in this is-

Chapters will be expanding to 32 pages by issue 5. Added to the regular lineup will be Chester Gould's **Dick Tracy** (daily and Sunday from the late 30's), **Brenda Starr** (daily and Sunday from the 30's) and two new strips produced specifically for **Chapters**.

The two "house" strips will be **Gani** by publisher Leo Giroux and editor Richard Howell and **Spicy Third Reich Stories** by Giroux and Arcana. The editors are also encouraging other non-professional artists to submit new strips for limited runs in **Chapters**.

The magazine is priced at $1.25 per copy and for subscription information you may write **Chapters**, 4 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass 02138.

© 1980 Aardvark-Vanaheim

The aardvark continues his journey in "She Devil in the Shadows," his most recent adventure chronicled by Dave Sims

The theme of the October **Lampoon** is Aggression. Shary Flenniken contributes a 3 page color strip "Change of Heart", about the never-ending male-female struggle over love and sex.

This month's Funny Pages has some changes: Sidney Harris' "Of the People" strip ends as his civil service President steps down. This issue marks the debut of "Hilary" a new strip written by Jody Uttal and drawn by Mary Wilshire. Charlie Rodrigues takes a look at the life and loves of Marilyn Monroe. Also included are strips by Gerry Capelle, M.K. Brown, Ron Barrett, Gahan Wilson, Holly Tuttle and Bobby London.

Regular **Lampoon** contributor B.K. Taylor won the "Cartoonist of the Year" award from the University of Texas.

I COULD NEVER LIVE WITH YOU.
YOU'RE TOO JEALOUS...
AND YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH NEGRO MUSIC IN YOUR RECORD COLLECTION.
LOTS OF GIRLS WANT ME TO LOVE THEM...
I'M IRRESISTABLE.
LOTS OF GUYS WANT ME TO LOVE THEM...
I HAVE A JOB.

©1980 National Lampoon

An excerpt from Shary Flennken's "Change of Heart" which appears in the October **Lampoon**. The story explores the depth and vacuousness of traditional roles

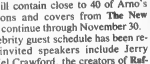
Beginning Sunday, Setember 21, the museum will feature a major retrospective of Peter Arno, the cartoonist for **The New Yorker** magazine. The exhibit will contain close to 40 of Arno's original cartoons and covers from **The New Yorker**. It will continue through November 30.

The fall celebrity guest schedule has been released. The invited speakers include Jerry Dumas and Mel Crawford, the creators of **Rafferty** (September 7). Tex Blaisdell, who has worked on the **Little Orphan Annie**, **Popeye** and **Prince Valiant** strips in addition to comic book work (October 5). Leonard Maltin, the author of **Of Mice and Magic** (November 2) and Jules Feiffer creator of **Feiffer**, Broadway playright, Hollywood screenwriter and author of **The Great Comic Book Heroes** (December 7).

Last month the museum sponsored an animation demonstration by Ball and Chain Studios, a commercial animation group. For more information about upcoming museum events write: Museum of Cartoon Art, Comly Ave, Port Chester, New York 10573.

© 1980 Mel Crawford and Jerry Dumas

Two excerpts from **Rafferty**, the new comic strip written by Jerry Dumas and illustrated by Mel Crawford. The feature is based upon Jerry Dumas' internationally acclaimed children's book **Rabbits** [illegible].



After four years of only publishing reprints, Charlton Comics is preparing the first issue of a tryout title featuring original material. The first issue of a 50¢, four color **Charlton Bullseye** will contain a story by Florida artist Don Reed. Reed had contacted Charlton on his own with a plot idea involving two old Charlton characters, the Blue Beetle and the Question. After discovering that Charlton could not afford to pay him, Reed volunteered to work for free in order to get his story into print. Editors George Wildman and Bill Pearson agreed and Reed is currently preparing his story for the premiere of **Charlton Bullseye**. This showcase book has no relation to the fanzine that Charlton published under the same name in the middle 70's, so the comic will begin with number one. **Charlton Bullseye** will be a March cover dated release and should be out in January.

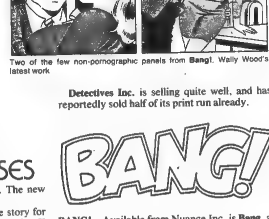
The editors would like to put **Charlton Bullseye** on a regular schedule but management has not awarded the book a big enough budget to pay for contributors. Pearson acknowledged that the book pays contributors, "less than some fanzines." He points out however that **Charlton Bullseye** is a good place for unknowns to showcase their work for the major comic book publishing houses. Wildman and Pearson hope that the book will entertain the regular Charlton reader in addition to garnering a good response from the specialty market. If the book does well and they can afford to pay their artists and writers, they expect to make **Bullseye** a regular title.

Bullseye will replace the western reprint title **Gunfighters**. Currently, Charlton publishes 9 reprint books: **Billy the Kid**, **Charlton Classics** (featuring **Hercules** by Sam Glanzman), **Haunted**, **Ghostly Haunts**, **Ghostly Tales** and 4 war titles. Charlton's bestselling titles, according to Pearson, are the war books.

© 1980 Peter Arno

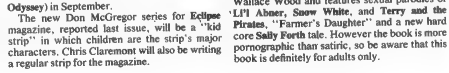
"Come, Osbert! No theatrics!"

One of Peter Arno's famous **New Yorker** cartoons


THE NEXT MORNING, SALLY STARTS HER NEW CAREER...
YES?
I'M SALLY, YOUR SUBSCRIPTN.?
COME IN... TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES AND LIE DOWN ON THE COUCH
HERE NOW I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL!
© 1980 Nuance Inc

Two of the few non-pornographic panels from **Bang!**, Wally Wood's latest work

Detectives Inc. is selling quite well, and has reportedly sold half of its print run already.



Stewart the Rat has been delayed. The new projected release date is Halloween.

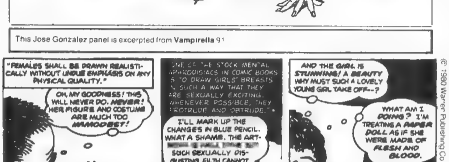
Jim Starlin has completed a 6 page story for **Eclipse** magazine, entitled Amber III (Amber II appeared in the August 1979 issue of **Heavy Metal**). Starlin will also begin work on his album book for Eclipse (**Metamorphsis Odyssey**) in September.

The new Don McGregor series for **Eclipse** magazine, reported last issue, will be a "kid strip" in which children are the strip's major characters. Chris Claremont will also be writing a regular strip for the magazine.

BANG! Available from Nuance Inc. is **Bang**, a publication "with the intent of informing and educating the adult public on various aspects of human sexuality." The book is illustrated by Wallace Wood and features sexual parodies of **Li'l Abner**, **Snow White**, and **Terry and the Pirates**, "Farmer's Daughter" and a new hard core **Sally Forth** tale. However the book is more pornographic than satiric, so be aware that this book is definitely for adults only.

THERE SOUND SCREAMING THIS COLD AND WIND-BLEAK NIGHT... A MIND SCREAMING IN PAIN... LOST AND BARELY REMEMBERED AWARENESS THAT IS OF EARTH AND HUMAN... THE HALF-REMEMBERED FRAGMENTS OF WHAT SEEMED TO BE A WEEK OF STRONG HORROR...
A MIND BELONGING TO VAMPIRELLA, STARCHILD OF DRAKULON.

This Jose Gonzalez panel is excerpted from **Vampirella** 91


"FEMALES SHALL BE DRAWN REALISTICALLY WITHOUT UNDUE EMPHASIS ON ANY PHYSICAL QUALITY."
OH, MY GOODNESS! THIS WILL NEVER DO, MEWSER! HER FIGURE AND CLOTHING ARE MUCH TOO SUGGESTIVE!
I'LL MARK UP THE CHANGES IN BLUE PENCIL. WHAT A SHAME. THE ART WORK IS QUITE GOOD, BUT SUCH SEXUALLY DISGUSTING FILTH CANNOT BE ALLOWED.
FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTION OF THE INNOCENT!
JOE SE'EL STOCK MENTAL SUGGESTIONS IN COMIC BOOKS IS "DRAWN WILD" PARASITE IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE SEXUALLY EXCITING WHENEVER POSSIBLE. THEY EXPLOIT FEAR AND PERVERSION.
AND THE GIRL IS STUNNING! A BEAUTY WHY MUST SUCH A LOVELY YOUNG GIRL TAKE OFF--?
WHAT AM I DOING? I'M TREATING A PAPER DOLL AS IF SHE WERE MADE OF FLESH AND BLOOD.
PERHAPS I SHOULD QUIT FOR THE DAY. YES, I THINK I WILL. I'LL TAKE THIS WITH ME. CHECK IT AT HOME!

The Comic Book Code at work as seen by Bob Toomey and Leo Duranona. The Watchel s compiled by his own moral standards in this excerpt from **Creepy** 122

SO, WARRIOR! YOU HAVE DISCOVERED THE MYSTIC WRITINGS OF THE ESSENES... HOLY RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE!
IT IS ONLY FITTING THEM THAT YOU JOIN THEM...
IN DEATH!
YOU? IT IS NOT POSSIBLE
YOU HAVE BEEN SLAIN!

Voltar faces an assasin hired by the Evil One. From **Rook** 5, art by Alfredo P. Alcala.

WARREN

Currently Warren publications is drifting away from the reliance on American material that was initiated under the last editorial reign. An example of this trend is the return of former Warren contributor Jose Bea to **Eerie** this month. The first installment of Don McGregor's **Mist** series, reported last month, has also been assigned to a European artist.

NEW MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

New Media Publications (which publishes **Comics Feature**) is expanding its operations to include two divisions: a comic book commentary line and a comic book line which will produce all-new comic books by professionals targeted for the direct distribution-specialty shop market. Former Marvel writer Peter Gillis has been hired as the editorial director of New Media Publications. His duties will include editing the comic book line and overseeing the comic book commentary line which will be edited by Richard Howell and Carol Kalish

At present two black and white quarterly titles are planned for New Media's comic line. **Fantasy Illustrated** will contain 4 regular science fiction and/or fantasy oriented series. **Adventure Illustrated** will feature 4 "contemporary and historical adventure series" culled from the western, crime, pirate and Arthurian literary genres. Gillis will write a new western series, **Ransom**, for the book. Both books tentatively scheduled for the first half of 1981, will be priced at $1.95 and will be 64; sport a color cover and carry at least one text feature. Successful series will be spun off into their own books which will be 32 pages long and retail for $1.25. As many as 8 spinoffs are planned in the first year of publication.

New Media also plans a revival of **Star Studded Comics**. Underground artist Grass Green will edit this title acting in an executive capacity. The material for the book will be produced exclusively by fan writers and artists. They will be paid a minimal fee for their work with their real compensation coming from the opportunity to publish their work.

In addition to inheriting the editorial reins of **Comics Feature** from departing editor Dean Mullaney, Richard Howell and Carol Kalish will also produce 3 new magazines for the comic book commentary line. Peter Sanderson will remain as **Feature's** associate editor.

The new magazines include **Artform** (quarterly) which will address general aesthetic questions of film and comics, **LOC** (bi-monthly, first issue scheduled in October) which will feature reviews, columns and letters of comment by noted fans and comic book commentators and **Brush Strokes** (quarterly, first issue due in March) which will contain articles about specific comic book art techniques and criticism of the work of aspiring artists by comic book professionals.

Rowell and Kalish will continue producing **Chapters** on a monthly schedule in addition to editing New Media's comic book commentary line and functioning as Production Manager and Circulation Director respectively, for New Media's comic book line.

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© 1980 Warner Bros. Inc.
© 1980 Wayne Pacific Inc.

The first new entries in the 1981 calendar field have been announced. **The Space Art Calendar** features art by Ron Miller, David Egge, Don Dixon, Don Davis, Chesley Bonestell, Ludek Pesek, and others. Listed are important astronomical dates, birthdates of space pioneers, anniversaries of significant space achievements, major eclipses and other celestial happenings. The 26 page calendar contains many full color illustrations and sells for $6.95

The Miss Piggy Cover Girl Fantasy Calendar spotlights Miss Piggy in satirical mock-ups of the covers of twelve national magazines. (**Time, Life, Field and Stream, Omni, Popular Mechanics**, etc.). Each of the calendar pages offers revealing details about the Muppet, written in the style of that month's magazine. Also included is a two-page pull-out centerfold of Miss Piggy The calender retails for $7.95.

The **Boris Vallejo Fantasy Calendar** features 15 paintings by Boris including his first book cover (**I Am a Barbarian**) and his most recent (**Berserker Man**). Also included in this $5.95 calendar are illustrations from **Lavalite World, The Nubian Warrior, The Broken Sword, The Last Stand**, and **The Amazon's Pet.**

* * *

Also new is **Cinefex** a magazine devoted to the study of cinematic special effects. Included in issue 1 is a discussion with Douglas Trumball on the problems he encountered in **Star Trek: The Motion Picture** and a look at the collaborative effort responsible for **Alien.** Just out is issue 2 which features an in-depth review of **The Empire Strikes Back** The magazine carries a $3.50 cover price.

* * *

Coming out in the fall will be four new **Starlog** photo guidebooks. **Science Fiction Toys and Models, Vol. 1** is a 34-page comprehensive photo catalog, covering four generations of toy ray guns, flying saucers, spaceships, hobby kits, and many other merchandising tie-ins. The book, which sells for $3.95, is the first of a three-volume series.

Science Fiction Television, Vol. 1 is a 96-page photo guidebook to 10 science fiction TV shows including **Ricky Jones, Space Commander; Batman; Star Trek; Doctor Who; Space: 1999;** and **Battlestar Galactica.** Every episode of each of the 10 series is covered with plot synopses, cast lists, production credits, and rare photos. The book retails for $7.95.

Science Fiction Costumes and Uniforms is a 34-page book featuring interviews with major designers, technical advisors, costume contest winners, and other celebrities. Also included is a chapter describing how fans can design and construct their own costumes. Priced at $3.95, the book contains color photographs of many of the costumes from **Star Trek, Battlestar Galactica, Star Wars** and other shows.

Concluding the fall **Starlog** offerings is **50 Years of Science Fiction Demons and Devils**, a 96-page book with reproductions of movie posters, lobby cards, and promotional material from monster movies of the past 50 years. Also included in this volume, which sells for $8.95, is a complete collection of Universal's monster movie posters.

* * *

Attempting to duplicate the success of the Marvel and DC trade paperback reprints, Archie Comics will be releasing **The Best of Archie** in October. The book is edited by Michael Uslan and Jeffrey Mendel and features 224 pages of color reprints. Uslan and Mendel have also written an introduction for the book. Priced at $7.95, **The Best of Archie** is a softcover, 256 page, 7 × 10 book.

* * *

Michael Kaluta is preparing a signed and numbered limited edition portfolio based on his work for **Starstruck**, an off-Broadway SF play. It will consist of six plates and is priced at $15.00

* * *

An oblong, hardcover vesion of the $200.00 deluxe **Snow White** book is due out in September. Among the many color plates are previously unpublished sketches from the feature length cartoon. The book will retail for $14.95

* * *

Frazetta Book Four will be available in September. The first 3 Frazetta books have sold 600,000 copies and were regularly listed on the **New York Times** bestseller list. The 96 page book will contain five previously unpublished black and white plates and 31 full-color pages.

* * *

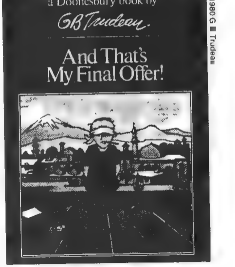
Reports of the death of **Metal Hurlant** magazine appear to be greatly exaggerated according to European correspondent Mal Burns. Although **Metal Hurlant** is not longer supplying **Heavy Metal** with material, Burns reports that the magazine will be assuming a fortnightly schedule (every two weeks) beginning next month and is now published in full-color.

* * *

Coming in September is a new **Doonesbury** book by Garry Trudeau, **That's My Final Offer!** Collected in this book is a selection of the **Doonesbury** strips from the late 70's. Included are Duke's encounter with an Iranian firing squad, Brenner's settling of Duke's estate, the introduction of Joanie Caucas Jr., Rick Redfern's meeting with David Halberstam and the "Seventies Revival Party." The 128 page book will be softcover and retail for $3.95.

* * *

Paper Tiger Pop Art announced the production of 4 softbound art books. Available in September will be **Jack Griffin**, a collection by the underground cartoonist and rock album cover artist and **Solar Wind** by English fantasy artist Peter Jones with the text written by Jack Vance. Coming in October is **3-D Eye** by British Underground artist Michael English and **Airflow** by Phillip Castle, with an introduction by Bevius Hillier Each book will cost $10.95. The Michael English book is 127 pages, the other 3 books are 96 pages long. All of the books contain an extensive amount of color material. Both **Griffin** and **Solar Wind** are entirely comprised of four color illustrations. ■



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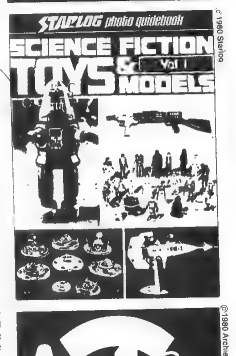

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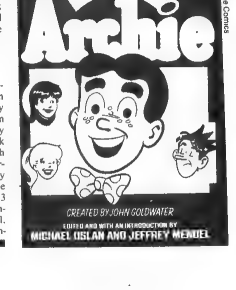

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Dan Perkins
Manager, Reader Survey

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   - ☐ Boring

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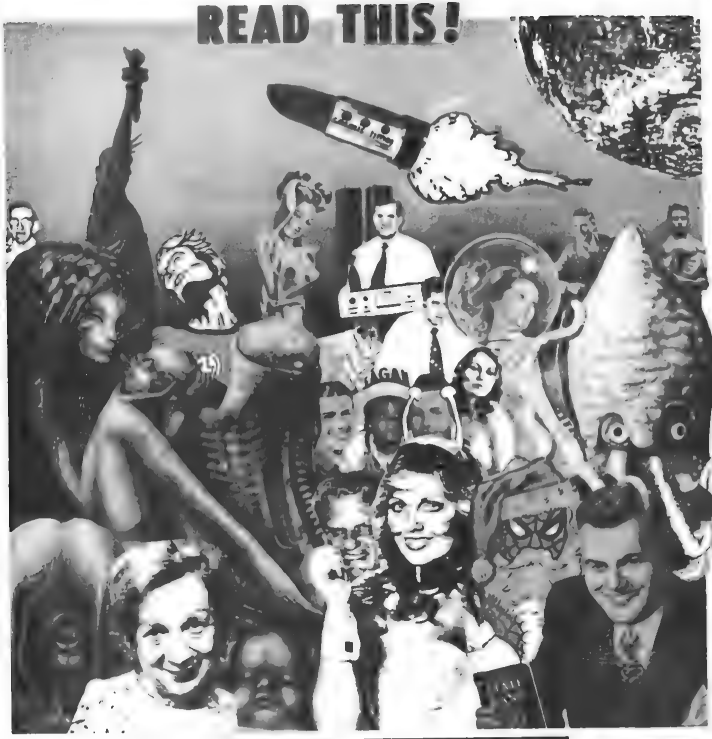

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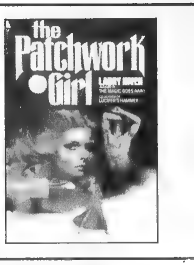


by **Doug Murray**

There's been a peculiar new convention in the publishing industry of late—a convention brought about by the truths of the national economy. Where once the hardbacked first edition was a way of life, there is now a new breed of first edition: the illustrated, oversized paperback has made its appearance.

The idea of the paperback first edition is nothing new, prestigious paperback publishers like Ace and Ballantine have been doing that for years—but the big name writers always had their first printings in hardbacked volumes—volumes whose price has risen from an average of $4.95 in the late fifties to around $12.95 today. That price is unacceptable to the vast number of Americans who are buying most books—some compromise had to be reached.

Well, one of those big name paperback houses had the answer—oversized paperbacks, deluxe editions with heavy illustrations and a price in the $5-6 range were introduced to the ordinary paperback outlets—and the results have been very encouraging.

Paperback firsts, by Anderson, Niven, Heinlein and the other big names in the Fantasy/S-F field have been big sellers. The paperback house has the option (always taken) to then release the book in a standard format, thereby increasing the circulation and the profit margin.

Additionally, the inclusion of fine illustrations by such artists as Esteban Maroto (*And then the Magic Came*), Fernando Fernandez (*A Stone in Heaven*) and others brings a touch of the comic art market into play—an extra source of profit.

★

This idea is succeeding, and proof of that success is in the issuance of *Number of the Beast* (Fawcett $6.95). *Number of the Beast* is the latest novel by the acknowledged master of the science fiction form, Robert A. Heinlein. Heinlein, who has not written anything since *Time Enough for Love* seven years ago, has long been regarded as the premier Science-Fiction novelist. His works from the early *Rocket Ship Galileo* to the immensely popular and influential *Stranger in a Strange Land* have sold millions of copies, and with the American First Edition of his latest book in the soft-cover format, the new look seems secure.

As for *Number of the Beast*, it is, in many ways, the quintessential Heinlein novel. It has all of the many touches that have come to be regarded as typically Heinlein: The strong intelligent, wisecracking hero; the equally strong, beautiful, and sexually aware young companion; and the sage, helpful, and immensely clever father/best friend figure.

The plot itself is typically Heinleinian, involving the discovery of a new means of travel (the continua craft), and the subsequent discovery of the insidiously hidden conquest of Earth by unknown beings. However, from this opening, the book spreads into a sort of cosmic tour of the science fictional universe, encompassing the works of virtually all other fantastists from Lewis Carroll (who makes a guest appearance), through the wonderful wizard of Oz to Lensman Kimball Kinnison, finally climaxing in a mind blowing convention including every fictional character since the dawn of literature.

Number of the Beast is not Heinlein's best (the man seems to be beyond his prime) and it may well be his planned exit from the writing scene, as it ties up every loose end in both his own, and everyone else's fiction. It is a vastly entertaining book, and one that I would highly recommend in any format, but recommend even more highly in the oversized paperback, containing, as it does, some dynamite illustrations by the Powers.

★

From Heinlein, the grand master of s-f, let's turn to one of the current masters. Larry Niven, who has won a number of science fiction awards, has a new novel, also in the oversized, heavily illustrated class.

The Patchwork Girl (Ace $5.95) is another escapade of Gil "The Arm" Hamilton, a kind of latter day, liberated, Kojak. This time Gil is on the moon as part of a conference concerning organ removal and storage on the moon. Seems old Luna has become a sort of storehouse of transplantable organs, and their source, from convicted criminals, has come into question. While the conference goes on, one of its members is nearly murdered by an unknown assailant, and the likeliest suspect is the most beautiful woman on the moon, an old flame of Gil's. After an amazingly short trial, the girl is shipped off to the organ banks and Gil is left wondering not only if she is indeed guilty (an idea his emotions tell him to reject), but whether justice is really being served in the speed of lunar jurisprudence.

His subsequent investigation, and its unusual denouement, say a lot about 'justice' as opposed to 'expedience'.

Again, the oversized paperback format, with well rendered illustrations by Fernandez, is a joy to the eye, as well as a literary pleasure for the mind.

★

One last oversized edition to talk about *The Spirit of Dorsai* (Ace $5.95), and its companion *Lost Dorsai* (also Ace $4.95) are noteworthy for many reasons. *Spirit of Dorsai* is Gordon Dickson's most interesting addition to the Childe cycle in several years. Introducing the "Ethical Man", and Amanda, a fully competent and heroic *female* figure, Dickson has expanded both the scope and character of his Dorsai novels.

For the uninitiated, the Dorsai are a sort of race of super-soldiers, bred and trained on their planet Dorsai, as mercenary warriors. The Dorsai sell their skills to other planets and systems to allow their own world to survive economically in a universe based on the barter ethic. The Dorsai, while superb soldiers, are equally superb human beings, fighting for victory, rather than blood.

The Spirit of Dorsai gives an excellent glimpse at the inner workings of these 'super soldiers' and what makes them tick. That glimpse is a whetting of the appetite for the stories of *The Final Encyclopedia*, a work that will complete the Childe cycle that the stories of the Dorsai are the center of.

Lost Dorsai, an equally compelling book, gives us an insight into the other side of the Dorsai, the side of a perfect warrior who does not, for ethical reasons, want to kill others, and who is willing to sacrifice his life rather than his ethics.

Both books are fine illustrations of a classic series, and while *Lost Dorsai* is the first of the oversized paperbacks *not* to include heavy illustrations, it is still a fine book and a good buy.

★

As a youngster, I discovered for the first time the world of E.E. "Doc" Smith. In the early sixties, Ballantine presented the first paperback printings of the famed *Lensmen* series, and I was enthralled. Space battles ranging from one end of the Galaxy to the other. Strange beings, from the giant reptillian Worsel, to the frightening Eich (a cross between a vulture and an octopus), ranged the pages of Smith's epics, ranged with the mighty and heroic men of the

Galactic Patrol, especially the incomparable Gray Lensman, Kimball Kinnison.

Well, that universe is back! *Dragon Lensmen* (Bantam $1.95) is the first of a projected series by David A. Kyle, a protege and friend of Doc Smith's. *Dragon Lensmen* is the story of Worsel of Valentia, one of the four second-stage Lensmen who comprise the best of the universe. Worsel is faced with a number of unusual companions and enemies in the course of this adventure, ranging from the young Lensman Lalla Kallarta to 24 of 6, the unique paraman who lends the novel its final touch of the weird.

I wish that I could report that *Dragon Lensman* is a fitting addition to Doc's universe. Alas, I cannot. The story line is rather weakly linked together, and the menace is too fragmented to be really formidable. Kyle just doesn't have the magic touch of old "Doc", so I'd recommend this one only to the diehard fans and completists.

★

In other genre news, the boys at Pinnacle are still at it. As you probably know, the *Executioner* saga has been the biggest selling paperback series in history. But author Don Pendleton decided that he wanted out because he had taken the saga as far as it would reach. Mack Bolan had to die, and die he did in the final Executioner novel *Bloody Sabbath*.

But this is not the end of Bolan or Pendleton. The *Executioner* may be dead, but Mack Bolan, now called John Phoenix is very much alive, and the first of the *Phoenix* novels, originally scheduled for August will be released in mid to late September. John Phoenix, now freed from fighting the "beaten" Mafia has a new assignment. He and his picked group of men and women will fight international terrorism. It's a big job, but nothing is too big for the man who beat the Mafia. Look for John Phoenix, coming soon.

Pinnacle's other adventure series have not achieved the success that the *Executioner* has. Higher overhead and a decreasing readership have forced cutbacks on some titles. However *The Destroyer*, up to #40 (*Dangerous Games*) with #41 due out in September, and *Edge* still continue to sell strongly.

Tower books has its own series of adventure thrillers available in September. Tower's line centers on a certain sexual orientation that seems to appeal to a male readership. Nonetheless, with the Carter Brown series newest *The Spanking Girls*, Trigger Lady, (featuring Anna J., Private Detective) and their own Honey West, how can you go wrong?

★

DAW books continues to stick to science fiction, and their addition of *The Book of Poul Anderson* to their *Books of...* series is a fine idea. Anderson is one of the world's best fantasy writers. Included in this book is the brilliant *Queen of Air and Darkness*, along with critical commentary on same. This book is a fine addition to any collection.

★

On the movie front, we have been eagerly awaiting the release of Charles Lippincott's journal of the *Making of Star Wars* for over two years now, and no release date has yet been set. The story of Lippincott's involvement with the Star Wars corporation and eventual easing out, would make a book in itself, and probably eventually will. For now however, we'll have to be satisfied with *A Journal of the Making of the Empire Strikes Back* by Alan Arnold (Ballantine $2.75)

Arnold does not appear to be the perfect choice for this book. A unit publicist handpicked for *Empire*, Arnold is just a little too jaded and self-centered to be the perfect instrument for the story of the Star Wars team at work.

However, he is a competent writer, and his account of the day-to-day struggle to make a bigger-than-life motion picture work is both informative and intriguing.

Equally intriguing are the two sections of behind-the-scenes photos that grace the book—photos that range from shots of Anthony Daniels manipulating C3PO while the robot is on the back of Chewbacca to photos of Yoda being assembled.

For those of you interested in *Star Wars* and movies in general, this is a must.

★

While I'm on the subject of movies, there is an increasing practice of releasing novelizations of movie scripts at about the time the film comes into release. This is both a blessing and a curse. Certainly, for collectors to have access to a novelization of what might come to be a favorite film is a good thing. On the other hand, the reading of such books can be a hazard because you'll spoil all of the surprises for yourself and any companions.

Regardless, the novelizations are here to stay, and the paperback houses seem determined to keep us supplied with special movie editions even on old best sellers.

Just a sampling of the good stuff currently or soon to be available:

The Empire Strikes Back—a fine novelization by comics scripter Don Glut, a man to be watched in the future.

The Big Red One—not as exciting as the film.

The Great Santini—a great movie, a great book.

The Wolfen—super suspense novel, the movie could be a real sleeper.

The Howling—so-so suspense but the movie looks much more promising.

Raise the Titanic—great book if you like that sort of thing, but the movie is a bit of a disappointment.

Flash Gordon—updating this classic leaves things to be desired—what can you expect from Dino de Laurentis?

The Other Side of the Mountain Part II—Schlock begets schlock.

Deathship—Deadly.

Xanadu—nice music, don't waste your eyes otherwise.

★

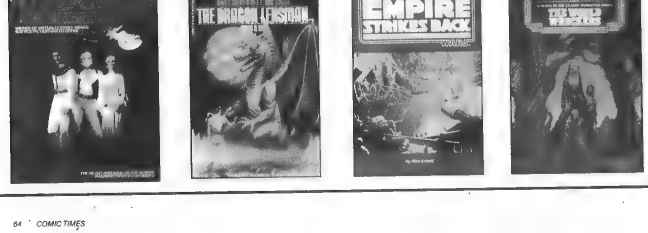
Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Darkover* novels reissued by Ace continue to be a pleasant experience. The world of Darkover is rich and varied, and this uniform edition, with fine cover by the talented Mike Whelan allows the untinted an opportunity to explore a fine fantasy world.

Wargamers should be interested that TRS has finally released its anxiously awaited addition to its D&D Line, *Heroes and Demigods* ($7.95). For all of you building your advanced dungeon and needing characters this is the place to look.

Finally, for the comic aficionado—look for the issuance of Al Williamson's rendition of the new *Flash Gordon* movie from Marvel this month. It will be available in both a comic magazine and a soft cover format and is another fine example of the Williamson talent at work.

Also available are a boxed edition of Stan Lee's *Origins of Marvel Comics*, and *Son of Origins*, a nice edition to a fledgling library and a reissue of the first four issues of *Cerebus the Aardvark* in a paperback format. For those of you who have never seen him, Cerebus is a delight, a cross between Howard the Duck and Conan. Definitely recommended.

That's it for this month—stay tuned and we'll try to keep you posted as to what is, and what isn't worth your book buying dollar. So long for now.



Trivia by Whiz & The Kid

Illustration by Edward Meneve

Is it just our imagination or does this magazine just keep getting better and better? And do we keep getting more trivial? You bet we do! But in order for us to really appeal to your needs in the realm of fantastically fun facts you've got to keep those cards and letters coming in, folks. Just mail all your questions to Whiz & The Kid c/o This magazine.

This time around we hope to prove that turnabout is fair play. Last issue we devoted the column to that marvelous team of mutants, the X-Men. This time let us go over to the Distinguished Competition and look at their super-team, The Justice League Of America.

1. How many people have been offered membership in the League but have refused?
2. Who was the first new recruit into the original League and who was the last to tender a resignation?
3. Who used to record all of the League's adventures?
4. How many members of the League have been or are married?
5. How many Justice League members have counterparts on other earths?
6. Name the League's honorary members.
7. Who did the JLA team-up with in "The Planet That Came To A Standstill"?
8. Who resigned because he felt it was his duty to return and help his homeless people?
9. Who created the new Red Tornado?
10. Who is his current alter-ego?
11. Name the members who have left and returned to the JLA.
12. Who was the member of the League of Assassins who was supposed to be the world's greatest archer?
13. Who caused the JLA to move to their new Satellite HQ?
14. Who was the first villain invited to their new HQ?
15. Which of these characters have never appeared in the pages of the JLA?: Deadman, Vigilante, Jonah Hex, Captain Marvel, Blackhawks, and Brainiac 5.
16. Who was known as the One-Man Justice League?
17. Where does the JLA spend many of its Halloweens?
18. Who was Starbreaker?
19. Who was the Creature in the Golden Cage?
20. Was it necessary to reveal your alter-ego to become a member of the JLA?

answers on page 82

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Close Up:

The Legend of the Lone Ranger

by Jim Burns

The Legend of the Lone Ranger is a $15 million production from ITC and Jack Wrather Productions. "Our approach to dealing with the Lone Ranger was to drop him into the pages of history," says producer Walter Coblenz (producer of **The Candidate, All the President's Men, The Onion Field**) "We did so much research on the masked man as he might have existed in the post Civil War period that I'm beginning to think that there really was a Lone Ranger."

Executive producer Martin Starger (**Friendly Fire** and NBC's **All Quiet on the Western Front**) and Coblenz selected famed cinematographer William Fraker (**Bullitt, Rosemary's Baby, Heaven Can Wait**) to direct the film. Fraker has directed only twice before: **Monte Walsh** (1970) and **Reflections of Fear** (1973).

Directing **The Legend of the Lone Ranger** was a homecoming of sorts for Fraker. His first job in Hollywood was as a film loader on **The Lone Ranger** TV show. Interestingly, **Monte Walsh** was also a western.

"I love westerns," Fraker beams. "The western period is one of the most romantic periods in history. It was another chance to conquer a frontier. The settling of the American west came and went in the duration of no more than a man's lifetime, a total of 60 years. The Lone Ranger symbolizes the west and the western. It's good vs. bad and the good will out. . .It's always very tempting to play with a myth and redefine it, whether it's classical or folklore, as in the case of the Lone Ranger."

Michael Kane (**Hot Stuff**, the story for **Smokey and the Bandit, Part II**) wrote the film's screenplay. His story is based upon the original Lone Ranger radio series.

It took eight months for the producers of **The Legend of the Lone Ranger** to find a proper "John Reid." Finally Klinton Spillsbury, an actor with virtually no experience was picked for the title role.

"When I read the script," says Spillsbury, "and saw how well-written it was, how serious the film intended to be, and how my part was going to be treated, I was certain that I wanted to do it. An actor ordinarily would have second thoughts about a first part which required him to wear a mask. But reading the script ended any concern that I had."

Michael Horse, the half Indian actor (a blend of Zuni, Yaqui and Cree) will portray Tonto in **The Legend of the Lone Ranger**. He is quite sensitive to the series' generally stereotypical portrayal of Tonto.

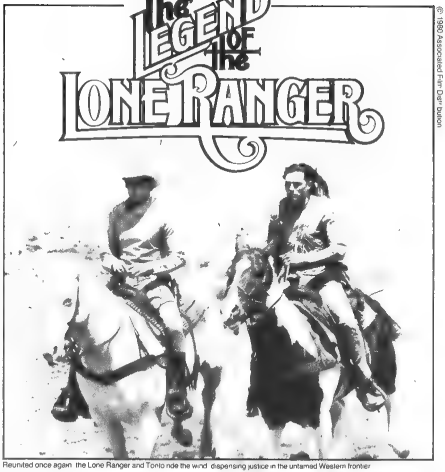
"Tonto is treated with dignity and strength," Horse claims. "The relationship between him and the Lone Ranger is much more complex than earlier treatments of the story in other productions. There is an interesting tone of realism to the story, especially in how the settling of the West had its effect on the Indian culture. As it stands now, Tonto is a strong, decisive man in the film, which also portrays Indians in more realistic terms than those in which they have been seen. Tonto is a role that has never been taken seriously, but I think that this film will change that."

To lend an air of familiarity and tradition to the production, John Hart, who replaced Clayton Moore as the Lone Ranger in 52 episodes of the television series, was cast as a newspaper publisher.

"Times have changed," Hart muses. "We shot a show—a 44 page script—in two days back in the fifties. This film took **months** . . .

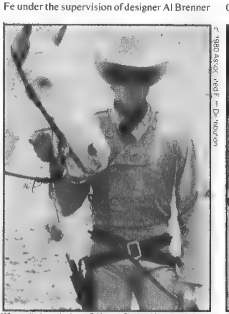
An entire western town was built near Santa Fe under the supervision of designer Al Brenner. Construction of the western village was greatly challenged by harsh weather, with the crew working through an 8 inch snowstorm that fell as late as April 12th.

The picture was shot on location in Utah, New Mexico and Monument Valley. It is slated for a Christmas release. ■



© 1980 Associated Film Distribution

Reunited once again, the Lone Ranger and Tonto ride the wind, dispensing justice in the untamed Western frontier.



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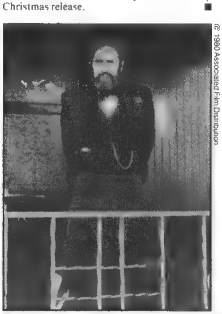
Who is that masked man? It's not Clayton Moore and it's not John Hart. Pictured above is Klinton Spillsbery, an actor who had reservations about donning the famous mask.



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Times are hard in the wild, wooly West. The populace needs a hero to avenge the deeds of evildoers.

Close Up:

by

Dan Perkins

Betty Boop for President?

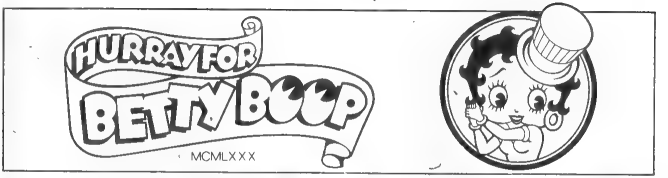
Madison Square Garden was a menagerie during the Democratic National Convention. As a legion of police and conspicuously unSecret Servicemen watched warily, wide-eyed delegates and downcast New Yorkers alike were beset by protestors representing a plethora of vastly different political beliefs. The Pie Man, awash with self importance, led Day-Glo Yippies wearing torn jeans in chants of "Death to the Klan!" and "Nazis make good lampshades!" (Visions of a crimson-stained olive branch?) The Jesus Freaks were out in force, warning anyone who would listen that they had better repent lest they die and suffer enternal damnation. The crowd was deafened with shouts of "Gay rights!", "Workers, revolt!", and . . . "Boop-boop-a-doop?"

Betty Boop for President. They had their Winnebago headquarters (the "Boopmobile") parked in a corner lot across from the Garden, six campaigning ingenues, and Betty herself . . .or a reasonable facsimile thereof. A small woman, adorned with a red, white, and blue sequined costume and matching garter, circulated through the crowd, delivering slogans and promises in a familiar, squeaky voice. "Don't be a droop, vote for the Boop." Handbills were being passed out, outlining a platform that promised to: take Congressmen off salary and put them on a straight commission basis; sell Ambassadorships to the highest bidders; transform the Capitol Rotunda into a roller-disco; print Bo Derek's photograph on postage stamps to erase the Post Office deficit; raise marriage license fees to $5000 to eliminate uncertainty, require all doctors to publish their med school grade average next to their names in the phone book, install a lie detector in the White House and truth serum in the Senate drinking fountain, establish lifetime pensions for aging comic characters; institute a national lottery with winners sharing 1% of all money printed during the year; and a ban on lobbies, except in hotels.

Is there a method to this madness? Members of the entourage would give little explanation, simply stating that the act was being financed by "five wealthy guys who like to do crazy things." Alan Abel, the Boop campaign manager, claimed, "It's to satirize national politics. We're us-

The two faces of Betty Boop: above, Victoria D'Orazi portrays Betty's physical incarnation; while below, the original animated Betty hula-dances topless in a once-controversial scene.

©1980 Newline Cinema



Above D'Orazi as Boop, her ingenues, and Alan Abel gather around Betty Boop's Kissing Booth. Below D'Orazi demonstrates Betty Boop's one-on-one campaigning to a member of the New York City Police Department.

ing Betty Boop to poke fun at the nonsense that prevails."

There turns out to be more to the picture, however, than first meets the eye. Abel, one might remember, was involved with the Society for Indecency to Naked Animals; established the Panhandlers School in the late sixties; and is dead, according to an obituary planted in the New York Times. He has been described as a master of the publicity stunt.

Fitting. New Line Cinema, it happens, has repackaged and re-edited old Betty Boop animation footage into an "all new" feature length film, *Hurray for Betty Boop*, which details Betty's attempts to become the first woman president of the United States. The Abel campaign is the cornerstone of the film's promotion, according to press releases, which predict, "This will set the stage for the film's release and increase recognition of the BETTY BOOP name." So much for the five wealthy and crazy guys . . .

Betty's new voice is spoken and sung by Victoria D'Orazi, a Los Angeles-based actress who portrays the character during the campaign. "I mostly do theatre," she says, momentarily dropping the assumed squeakiness from her voice. "This takes a lot more energy—" she gestures vaguely at the sea of madness surrounding the Garden, "It's like doing ten matinees a day."

Perhaps Betty Boop's chances for the Presidency can be summed up by the reaction of one elderly businessman who removed the stogie clenched between his teeth long enough to receive a kiss at Betty Boop's Kissing Booth. "She's got *my* vote, by God," he said to no one in particular as he went along his way.

Boop-boop-a-doop . . . ■

BIRTH OF THE VIDEOZINE

BY FRANK LOVECE

Thomas Edison never existed.

Neither did the Wright Brothers nor Alexander Graham Bell.

Their flesh-and-blood personas occupied space, of course, and bled their sweat and intellect, but what we want to believe in are the legends. Don't bother us with the fact that Edison had a lab full of assistants, or that the Wright Brothers jelled years of existing research more than relying on their own. Bell got his ideas from the telegraph, not heaven.

But the legends ... the legends. The lone inventor struggling against all odds. Ask humble Vladimir Zworykin about his accomplishments, though, and he'll tell you to go away, he's no legend.

So might the rest of the world—Vladimir who? But in the same sense that Edison gave us light, Wilbur and Orville gave us flight and Bell the means to call ahead for a pizza, Vladimir Zworykin gave us the mirror that masquerades as the world, that collection of electromagnetic circuitry and all-natural wood grain we've come to keep as a pet. In that same sense, Zworykin invented television.

At the offices of *Instant Replay*, the debt to him sits like an imp, patiently smiling at what all these youngsters are up to. Like the rest of Miami's Coconut Grove district, the place has the bohemian-cum-businessman look that's settled itself like a cat onto your new modular sofa. The suite of offices is in the middle of renovation, and the badly tacked, all-weather carpet and peeling peach-colored walls look incongruous against rooms stacked high with futuristic monitors, videotape recorders, amps, editors and master control panels, a Jack Kirby panorama of communication gadgetry.

The main product of this jumble, a magazine done on videotape instead of paper, includes a few minutes with Zworykin at the close of some of the tapes. At 91, the seldom-interviewed dean of all this technology tells the interviewer how tired he is of the medium he helped create, and hopes this innovation can change some of its Messianic tendencies.

Chuck Azar, the interviewer, smiles his ubiquitous huckster's smile and looks very patient. At 45, he is an enthusiastic manchild, tanned and topped with a Brillo pad of silver hair. Azar is owner and resident legend at what is essentially the first private videotape network, a company designed to produce and distribute original VT programing for the home.

Under his hard-sell aegis have been gathered a colony of young videomakers, all experimenting with this bi-monthly magazine. Each issue includes about a dozen segments of features, interviews and quasi-journalism, and grandiose examples of video art.

The four issues published so far have held, among other things, interviews with Cliff Robertson, Devo, Billy Preston, Sony founder Akio Morita, FBI film-pirating investigators and MPAA president Jack Valenti; montages of TV commercials from the Cannes Film Festival; bloopers and out-takes, often from purloined satellite transmissions; technical features on VT aspects; and contributors' pieces, ranging from NASA ultraslick and from the few established video artists, to this-is-Jared-Rappaport-in-Jacksonville reporting on a friend's efforts to fly a kite indoors. The quality of the offerings vary, but the project is catching on.

"I saw what radio did to family entertainment," says Azar, "and I saw television add another dimension. I expected videotape to hit big a long time ago." If and when it does—and the emergence of new, cheaper VT technology and department store availability indicates that it will—Azar's touch may prove as golden as with earlier ventures, including selling, at age 17, what he claims was the first color television in Florida. Since then he's made a retireable fortune in TV sales, innovative color clocks that do away with numbers and hands, and even in peddling Navajo jewelry in Europe.

The video panoply in which he's sole investor shouts out a sizeable risk, though Azar balks at calling it that. "The only thing we're risking at this point is to get real big, real fast." 20-year-old cameraman-editor Tom Brunstetter agrees that "it's happening so fast, you can just see the market coming. We're doing the same thing as television 30 years ago."

Instant Reply's videozine is distributed by mail order with plans to start working through record and video retail outlets. Their package is logical for these markets: The VT cassette is attached to an album-sized sleeve that holds program notes and will eventually hold videodiscs. The package is in a familiar shape and easy to grasp, and its silver/black graphics give it an elitist eye-catch.

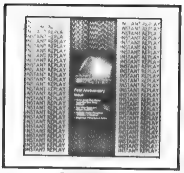
Instant Reply writer John Robson defines the target audience as those affluent enough to put up the $600-$1200 for a new VT recorder and tapes, but the magazine, he says, "is trying to be entertaining enough to serve general interest and still be good for the hobbyists." Defining the audience further—each two-hour cassette goes for about $60.

"What we're trying to do is show people there's more to video than seeing 'Mork and Mindy' when you want to." Robson watches an Evil Knievel montage on the screen in his office, and as the motorcyle stunt rider leaps over a hungry line of cars and crashes-crashes-crashes, tells you, "We're a small group doing something we believe's going to come around anyway."

One of the pet projects, and perhaps what *Instant Replay* does best, is filming live rock for their locally syndicated TV show, *Rock 'n' Roll 'n' Vision*, which

An Instant Replay reporter cradles her minicam

Chaz Shukar relaxes at the Instant Reply viewing room console


The videozine

Chuck Azar browses through the Instant Replay 5000™ four videotape library

Robson co-produces. "Face it, a 40-year-old cameraman with a studio camera isn't going to have the same sensibility about rock & roll that an eager young kid with a minicam will have." Live stage footage and Monkees-like video of Miami rock bands are among the best-produced pieces they have, more exciting than most of network TV's rock. Angles and synchronized cutting are clean, innovative and linear enough to tell a story. The camera crew is adept at manipulating focus and backgrounds to great effect, and typical TV gimmicks—like freeze frames thrown in indiscriminantly—are minimal.

The rest of Instant Replay's studio work suffers less from a lack of focus than from growing pains. One magazing issue, for instance, mixes vintage gasoline commercials with modern ads while cutting in and out with footage of a daredevil Moped rider attempting "to jump a gas line."

Not exactly inspired scriptwriting. In fact, once you get past its unresolved silliness the whole effect is ghostly and haunts much of the company's work. Like the earliest 30-second movies of waves on the beach or trains pulling into stations, which first please and then bore audiences not used to the spectacle of live film, there's a pervasive feeling that because you videotape from a moving sports car or hold your minicam out a moving plane to film clouds you're doing something new and challenging. The heritage of film puts an automatic layer of dust on that idea.

But videotape is a frontier and Azar is as bold as Copernicus. His most innovative brainchild may be a concept called Stereo Image[29] Video, or taking two different angles of the same event, especially live rock, and playing them side by side, simultaneously, with the same soundtrack and sync. "This way, your mind has to constantly decide which image to look at," beams Brunstetter, "and since you're never going to look at exactly the same images in the same order again, each time you view something this way, it's still new."

Active TV viewing, in other words. Compared to traditionally passive TV watching (which research suggests goes on in the dream-like, right-brain hemisphere), this is a drastic—potentially far-reaching—change.

Back on the passive side of the brain, however, Azar is experimenting with more abstract sound/visual connections. Using non-linear storytelling—say, a carefully trimmed montage of Nazi Germany synchronized with a love song—he pioneers a through osmosis rather than the digital 1+1=2 progression most authors aside from Joyce have utilized for centuries.

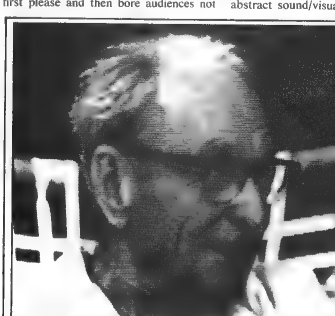
The doomsayer image of *A Clockwork Orange*—where rehabilitation of prisoner Alex through violent films paired with Beethoven warns allegorically of thought-control—floats briefly through your mind. Azar admits that "viewers, Americans particularly, have a tendency to do the easiest thing," especially with television.

"We try to put hooks into our programing to make people concentrate, because with videotape you've got a hold on all the emotions. I've no doubt it's going to be abused," as in the case of a brother medium, where a Tulane scientist's subliminal message-inducer, played with Muzak just below the threshold of human hearing in order to hypnotically reduce shop-lifting, is fair game for eager politicians and ad men.

The potential for passive suggestion is rampant in video, but Azar seems cognizant of a responsibility to make his viewers aware. So is his staff. "Anybody that does anything here has got to have that sense of responsibility. I can't train that. It has to be built-in. I guess that's why we hire young people—they're still unspoiled." And work cheap.

Aside from a fashion trade videozine in New York, there are no real analogies for what *Instant Replay* does, certainly none as similar as Pepsi/Coke or Burger King/McDonald's, so Azar and Zworykin seem natural progressions of each other. To the young man, the prime creator of television has given hours of recollections and, as far as TV is concerned, authoritative autobiography. The younger man is exploring, as Zworykin did, an unknown domain. Are they nuts or what?

"Anytime anybody does anything out of the average," smiles Azar, as always, "you're nuts. That's the definition of insanity. If I want to do something average, I'll go work in a real estate office." ■


Vladimir Zworykin was the subject of one Instant Replay article

This article has been updated from *Good Times* and is used with the author's permission. For more information, write to: Instant Replay, Inc. 2980 McFarlane, Ste 210, Miami, FL 33133, or phone (305)-448-7088.*

angry at Robin because Robin dropped out of college. Bruce Wayne's not very pleased with Robin for dropping out of college, either.

DAVE: *When did Robin drop out of college?*

GEORGE: He drops out of college at the beginning of the new *Titans* series. They just mention that he dropped out, and Kid Flash and Batman are both on his back for that. Kid Flash says that the only reason he's back in the Titans is because Raven wants him in.

DAVE: *Did you have to get approval on this from the editors of the Batman books?*

GEORGE: Well, considering that Jeanette Kahn and everyone else had to agree on the concept for *Titans*, and Len Wein, as editor, had to go through channels, I'm sure they had to get the agreement from everyone else that Robin was no longer in college.

DAVE: *This summer, they've already got Kirby's Fourth World as the team up with the JLA . . .*

GEORGE: That's the one I'm doing.

DAVE: *Are the Teen Titans going to be the team up guests the following year?*

They're the only group left.

GEORGE: Good question. I have no immediate plans for the next JLA-JSA crossover. When Dick died, I got the JLA under incredibly unfortunate circumstances. It was a hell of a way to make a debut on a book.

DAVE: *You started on the annual team up.*

GEORGE: I started on the second part of the three part team up. Dick did the first. Best thing he's ever done. Then I come in on the second part obviously to finish it off. It was a hell of a way to make a debut because it required an incredible amount of research. It was also in the second issue that they jumped to 25 pages. All of a sudden, I had more pages to work with. There are double page spreads, large panels and big shots of everybody. It was the perfect way to make a debut on that strip. The story I'm working on now is a standard *JLA* story, so I'm glad I had a good epic to start off on, because now my impact will be felt on the series.

DAVE: *When you were working at Marvel, were you using the Marvel style?*

GEORGE: Yes.

DAVE: *Now you'll be using the full script style?*

GEORGE: Only for *JLA*.

DAVE: *As the co-creator of the Teen Titans, you're using the Marvel style?*

GEORGE: Yes. I get a Teen Titans plot, and from that plot I do the breakdowns and then the pencils. The reason I'm doing *Justice League* full script is because it's written so far in advance. I'm working on issue 186. Gerry Conway has already written #189.

DAVE: *Can you ever catch up with him, if he keeps writing and you keep doing the pencils?*

GEORGE: Not at the rate he writes. Also now that he's used to that style, I don't want him to have to suddenly wait for me. That means he has to give me the plot, wait until I draw it, and then write it. By that time he could have been doing something else. This way, I know what all the characters are going to say. I try to work within those limits and adapt it to my style. I like that. It's a different exercise for me. The freedom that I get on the Teen Titans offsets that. I don't mind that. It's a new form of discipline, and I think it's good for an artist to know what it's like to be restricted in what he can do.

DAVE: *Are there many people working at DC now who get to use the Marvel style?*

GEORGE: Yes, there are, particularly since Marv Wolfman and Len Wein are both writing there. As a matter of fact, I'm

REALLY, STAN— WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR ALL WEEK!
I WAS OUT ON TOOL HERE...
...ACTUS N.J. JOB-BBING, SPREADING THE FAITH AS IT WERE
WHEN I GOT THIS EMERGENCY CALL FROM YOU AND BOY!
THEIR ANNOUNCING SERVICE SAYS THEY'RE OUT OF TOWN.
!! IS AN EMERGENCY...TO JOIN JOE SINNOTT'S WAITING FOR PAGE—RIGHT MOW!
AND HOW CAN WE DO OUR ADVANCED F.F. COMIC MAG— IF THEY DON'T TELL US WHAT THEY'VE BEEN INTO?
YOU GOT ANY IDEAS JACK? I KNOW YOU JUST GOT IN FROM THE COAST BUT—
SURE I'VE GOT AN IDEA...
AND IT'S RIO !!—BASCALY

WHY DON'T YOU TWO LADS JUST MAKE UP SOME STORIES ABOUT THE F.F.
WHAT? MAKE UP STORIES!
—INSTEAD OF JUST DRAWING WHAT REALLY HAPPENED!?
NICE TRY JACK... BUT IT JUST WON'T
NO, WAIT! STAN— HE'S RIGHT! CON'T YOU SEE?
I'LL WRITE SOME MADE-UP STORIES
...AND I'LL MAKE UP SOME SUPER VILLAINS AND—
YOU'RE SOUND LIKE HOCKEY-BOOMEY AND JUDY GARLAND!
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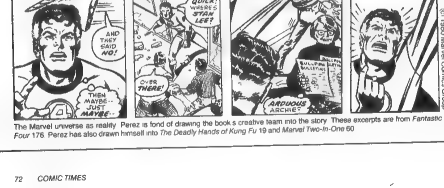

YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY! THE VIOLENT SORT, MATT DID YOU—!
BECAUSE I SIMPLY AVOID THOSE PEOPLE TO DO A COMIC BOOK ABOUT ME.
—THERE'S A WAY TO KEEP THAT ZANY FROM CAUSING ANY MORE DAMAGE!
AND THEY SAID NO!
QUICK! WHERE'S THE LEST
THEN I WATER— JUST MAYBE—
OVER THERE!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
WHO—? OH! IT'S YOU— THE FANTASTIC WHAT'S UP?
YOU AND I HAVE GOT TO HAVE A FAST POW-WOW, FRIEND STAN—
—AND I MEAN NOW!
ARGUOUS ARCHIE?
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

The Marvel universe as reality Perez is fond of drawing the book's creative team into the story. These excerpts are from *Fantastic Four* 176. Perez has also drawn himself into *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* 19 and *Marvel Two-In-One* 60.

sure Joe Staton works Marvel style, because Marv Wolfman writes *Green Lantern*. Most of the old timers there, the ones who have been doing full script for years, are still working full script. It's easier for them. It's established, so they don't have to worry about it. But many of the younger ones are starting to use Marvel style.

DAVE: *Does there come a point when an artist who's been working on full script for so many years and has been restricted from creative input, despite his talent as an artist, finds it difficult to switch to Marvel style and suddenly be responsible for laying out the book?*

GEORGE: Now that I'm working full script, I don't see it as a restriction, but that may be because I'm always so conscious of the look of the characters visually. When Carmine [Infantino] suddenly went over to Marvel and started working Marvel style, I saw some of the problems. Suddenly you don't have somebody else to do your thinking for you. You have to first figure out what the characters are doing and then figure out what they *might* say as opposed to what they are saying. But I think you can adapt easily enough. With many artists it's not that they're not creative, it's just that working from a full script is easier. The way they figure, "When I'm an artist, let me draw. I'll concentrate on drawing." As far as what the characters are saying, what they're doing, that's the writer's job.

I enjoy plotting stories, many artists do not. They say, "I want to draw the story. The character is interesting to me visually, but I don't need to worry about motivation." So, some artists prefer working full script. They're artists, not writers or plotters. They prefer it that way. I prefer to plot because I like the freedom that a plot gives me but I enjoy the discipline that a full script is teaching me.

DAVE: *I understand that at DC after your pencil work has been inked, you then ink it again.*

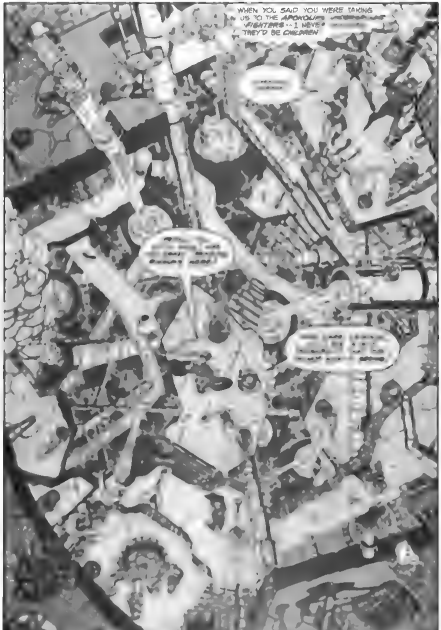
GEORGE: Yeah, as far as the *JLA* is concerned, I only managed to do that for a few pages of the first issue, because it was so far behind schedule and I was going to end up screwing them up if I took a day off a week just to drop in to do inking work, because I could have been penciling during that time. But Frank McLaughlin has obviously been inking Dick for so long that my stuff was a radical change for him. And since it was my first issue, I really wanted to make a decent debut. Frank's style is a bit on the thin side, a bit too fine, and I wanted to add a little weight.

DAVE: *About 50 pounds per character?*

GEORGE: Yeah. Frank didn't know that when I pencil in a detail, I want everything in there. I put in as much detail work as I could and hoped that he would add more if he did. But in some cases, he'd just ink my pencils very thin, so I added more weight to the lines. And I added more shadows. Sometimes I put shadows on the faces, and he'd erase them, but I wanted the shadows there. He's not used to an artist that would put a shadow on Superman's face. Superman is usually drawn very clean, but I wanted the effect to look dark and even Superman casts a shadow, you know.

DAVE: *Well, Neal Adams did that a little bit also, didn't he?*

GEORGE: Yeah, it's been done before. But Frank was not used to it. Frank was used to the very clean, more cartoony style of Dick's work, so I wanted to give it a little more of my interpretation. There's one page, that was a direct downshot to this strange labyrinth type cavern with pipes and multi-levels, and when Frank inked it, everything was so thin that the lines looked rather flat. So suddenly I started adding brickwork, details, cracks, shadows, anything. I spent an extra hour touching up that page and adding effects. Basically, I was just trying to make a good debut. I hope Frank and I mesh better as time goes on, as he gets used to my work.



Perez added background details to this page from *Justice League of America* 184 after it had been inked by Frank McLaughlin. I work very hard on them.

I'm very picky about my backgrounds.

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CHILD, IT IS TIME.
AS YOU WISH, VIZIER. DO NOT BE AFRAID-- I WILL DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.
THOUGH IT WILL MOST LIKELY COST YOUR LIFE?
IT IS MY LIFE TO GIVE.
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

This nice healthy Ororo is from *X-Men Annual 3.*

DAVE: *Giordano wouldn't be right for you either?*

GEORGE: Giordano knows more about the way I draw. He inked the Titans' giveaway thing that's in the middle of *DC Presents* #26.

DAVE: *So you've worked with him.*

GEORGE: I have worked with him. The trouble is, if I can rely that it's just going to be Dick, then I'm safe. But Dick also has background men. That's how he manages to do the amount of work that he does. Unfortunately, many of the background men, like Terry Austin, who are really, really good background men, are now inking on their own. Hopefully he'll find some new ones. But right now, they are not as good as they were before.

DAVE: *I've always thought Giordano was a bit misplaced. He seems like a magnificent penciler when he gets the chance, but he's used mostly as an inker.*

GEORGE: That's because he can ink very fast and so he earns decent money inking. Also he's doing so much commercial work, like posters and toy things. He's the one who does most of the merchandising and that's where he does most of his penciling. He's supposed to be penciling Aquaman, so he is coming back as a penciler. But he's one of the best inkers around. I enjoyed when he inked my covers because everything I penciled was followed.

My full pencils are the easiest thing for anyone to ink because everything is there. I'm very picky about my backgrounds. I work very hard on them. And there's a certain look that I like. I got so spoiled by Marvel after being inked by people like Austin, Gene Day and Joe Sinnott, who really went crazy on the backgrounds that I put in.

DAVE: *Have you ever requested to have an inker replaced?*

GEORGE: Well I will not have anyone taken off (no matter what my wishes are), unless they have something else to put him on. Like when I found out Carmine Infantino was going to be given *The Flash* my first question was, "What was going to happen to Don Heck?" He'll probably get *Dial H for Hero* or something else. I dislike anyone being taken off an assignment, for whatever reason, without them getting a different book to work on. I think if for nothing else but loyalty.

In a year and a half I'll be doing the 200th *JLA*. That one I may want to ink myself, just because it's the 200th issue.

DAVE: *And later you'll work as a freelancer on the 200th issue of the* X-Men?

GEORGE: No, the 200th issue of the *X-Men*, that's going to go to John Byrne. I can't see anyone else doing it.

DAVE: *Think he'll be doing it that many years?*

GEORGE: Yeah, well that's true. They just passed their 100th didn't they? Next one is *The Flash*, which will reach #300.

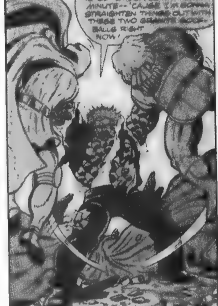
DAVE: *Which inkers do you prefer working with the most?*

GEORGE: I need an inker who's going to take the time to make it look as good as possible. I've enjoyed working with Joe Sinnott, Terry Austin, Joe Rubinstein and Bob Layton. Layton's working on a Black Widow thing, and an Iceman story. Gene Day, who's totally bananas as far as I'm concerned, puts in more work than I do. Gene Day inked me on *Marvel Two-in-One*. The only trouble is that Gene lives in Canada. I'm trying to think of how I can get Gene into DC, but Marvel's got a pretty tight hold on Gene right now.

DAVE: *Editors aren't worried about mailing out pencils and risking having them get lost?*

GEORGE: That's the whole point. DC is very paranoid about the mail. Which is why people like Gene Day or even a superheavyweight like John Byrne would have a harder time working at DC. Marvel takes its chances a lot more. They do a lot more work by mail than DC does. DC gets a little more worried, particularly if it's a top book.

DAVE: *A few months ago,* The Comic Reader *had an in-depth editorial about the death of the JLA, only they forgot to tell DC about it, complaining that for some reason the direction of the book over the*


I'D ADVISE ALL TO STAY INSIDE TO GET UNDER COVER FOR A MINUTE-- CAUSE I'M GOING STRAIGHT THROUGH OUT WITH THESE TWO GIANT GUNS. BALLS RIGHT NOW!
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

George Perez inked by Gene Day -- Gene Day puts in more work than I do -- Excerpt from *Marvel Two-in-One* 60

last few years had been to try to emulate The Avengers *and have everybody hate each other; arguing with each other.*

GEORGE: I read the review. I remember that it was printed just when Dick died.

DAVE: *The editorial had said that Dick and Gerry should be taken off* JLA. *You commented earlier that you want to have individual styles to follow the characters. Are you going to follow the characters as they are in their own books, or the individual tendencies that were developed over the last few years in* JLA*?*

GEORGE: Well, I am at the mercy, obviously, of the writer. Since he's already put the words into the characters, that limits me there.

There is one scene I'll be working on in a coming *JLA* which grates on me a little. But it's been okayed by the editors and everything else, so obviously I'll have no say about what can be written in the book. The Russians are painted pretty badly in the story, which I guess is Gerry's point of view and it really doesn't matter what mine is or not.

DAVE: *Are you a socialist?*

GEORGE: No, no. I'm not a socialist. It's just that there are two Russians there who are sympathetic characters, but The Flash has no sympathy whatever for them—"Better dead than Red." He considers them to be liars without even hearing them out.

Flash has never been politically oriented. It's almost like they need someone to stir up trouble and since Green Arrow's not there, the Flash'll do it.

DAVE: *Are you upset, having missed out on the Green Arrow?*

GEORGE: Green Arrow does appear in the story. There's a love scene between him and Black Canary that I'm just glad to get to draw.

DAVE: *She, too, has now put on a few pounds.*

GEORGE: Oh, yes, she's very zoftig. Thin-waisted but good. Cannot see her toes. [laughter] I just enjoy nice healthy women. A girl I'm using as a character in the *Teen Titans*, Carol Sladky, Czechoslovakian. She's a zoftig young lady friend of mine. She fits very well in the comic. So she was a natural to put into the book. Five foot ten and all woman from head to toe. I enjoy zoftig young women. My ex-wife was a zoftig young lady. Still is.

DAVE: *Where did you pick up a word like "zoftig" in the South Bronx?*

GEORGE: Oh Lord, the first person I ever heard use it — it was a common comment on my style of drawing women — I think it was Jim Shooter that said it, the first time I ever heard it.

DAVE: *Jim's not Jewish. He's from Pittsburgh. Where would he hear the word zoftig in Pittsburgh? [laughter]*

GEORGE: He heard. One of the people I was working with mentioned the fact that I tend to draw very zoftig women. Then I heard Elizabeth Taylor referred to as zoftig, and I said, "Hey, I've heard this word long enough, I'm going to find out what the hell they're talking about." [laughter] When I found out what it meant, I realized that they're right.

I enjoy drawing my women very healthy. And also my women tend to be fairly tall. Unless their being short is part of their character, like the Wasp. Obviously, I make her shorter than Scarlet Witch. Scarlet Witch, I figure, is about 5'9", 5'10". The Wasp is about 5'5", average height, and then there is Hell Cat, who is 5'2". I try to cater to all fetishes.

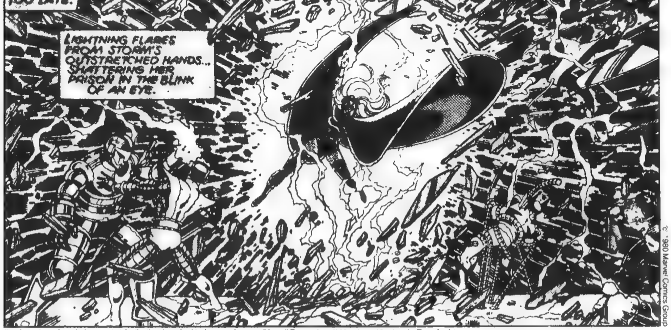
DAVE: *I have yet to see a small bosomed heroine.*

GEORGE: No, no, that's one thing I don't do. Jim Shooter liked it, too. The only thing he complained about was that I also tended to make the legs too thick. But now that I've thinned out the legs, they look even more zoftig. Like a snowcone that's going to fall over. [laughter]

But, I enjoy drawing female characters which is why I wanted to do a Black Widow strip for Marvel which I still have not finished. It's a fact that women are always buried in the group. Until I started drawing the *Avengers*, everyone was trying to change the Scarlet Witch's costume, saying that it was too dull. Then I showed them what it looks like when it's filled out. You 'fill out that costume right and that ain't dull. [laughter] So I filled out the costume, and now I'm starting to get a reputation as an artist who enjoys drawing the female form.

DAVE: *Are you going to give Boris a run for his money?*

GEORGE: Oh, well Boris is a painter. Obviously that's different. Although I have done some painting. I don't use my wife as a model, which is what he does.


TOO LATE.
LIGHTNING FLARES FROM STORM'S OUTSTRETCHED HANDS... SHATTERING HER PRISON IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
© 1989 Marvel Comics Group

I need an inker who's going to take the time to make it look as good as possible

Excerpt from *X-Men Annual 3*, inking by Terry Austin

and he has a gorgeous looking wife!

DAVE: *Do you work exclusively in water color, or do you use oil?*

GEORGE: Well, I don't do very much color work at all. When I did do color work, I used markers; color markers. You know, they come in quite handy, coloring in dye, or acrylic. Oil takes a while to dry, and I'm too impatient to wait for it. Obviously, it's a very versatile medium, but I just hated waiting. So acrylic at least saved me that hassle. It's not going to get the same effect, but it'll dry up instantly. You can just peel it right off. But I haven't done all that much painting, mostly portrait work. The painting that I have done, I've done mostly in water colors. During my vacation, I went on a cruise to Bermuda, and did 15 portraits. All women. I was no fool.

DAVE: *Readers are often unclear as to the distinction between a penciler and an inker. Do you want to clarify that?*

GEORGE: Well, the penciler is the one who does the initial drawing. There are two types of pencilers. There is the person who has done the full pencils, (which mean's he's done all the rendering, all the detail work, has spotted all the blacks in) so the inker just has to follow the lines and clean them up. Then there is the type of penciler who does just the breakdowns. He may draw the figures in and at least the basics of the backgrounds, letting the inker finish the drawing, and do all the finished rendering on it. The inker has to be an artist himself. The worst inkers are those who can't draw.

I remember one person asking me, "How can I go about being an inker?" and he did not have any drawing talent. He figured all you have to do is follow the lines. If you can't draw, you can't ink. The inker corrects mistakes, adds extra blacks and extra weight. When you're working with a pencil, the pencil only has one thickness, unless it goes blunt. So all the lines have the same weight and the same thickness. The inker must use four or five brushes or pens, each of a different thickness in order to make his lines a little thicker and so enable the central character to stand out. You use thinner lines for background objects so they don't draw too much attention away from the action. You use more blacks on central characters. Essentially, the inker takes the bones (the drawing) and puts a little more meat into it. It's like a science.

Now that I'm inking, myself, I'm getting a lot more respect for inkers. It takes a long time to ink well and I have still got a lot to learn. But you just don't draw the lines the way the penciler does, you have to know what weight to put on each individual line.

DAVE: *So then there are some circumstances where you could have a man being called a penciler, who really is just taking the concept of the script and breaking it up, but where the majority of the artwork is really done by the inker?*

GEORGE: On occasion. There are some inkers who do more work on a given penciler out of sheer style. They prefer putting more work in. What I call my breakdowns are considered by other pencilers as full pencils. It depends on the individual. Often, it breaks down to a 60-40 ratio or sometimes even to a 50-50 ratio, depending on the inker/penciler combination. Despite the fact that a penciler may be just breaking down a script to put all the figures in, you have to give the inker some

When asked which artists he preferred working with, Steve Englehart answered, "... I like guys who are really enthusiastic. I was quite pleased working with George Perez ... he was just so inventive." (From an interview in The Comics Times 2) Panel excerpted from *X-Men Annual 3*

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indication of where the hell everyone is, so the background has to be clear and all the faces have to be there. So it's mostly a 60-40 penciler-inker ratio.

DAVE: *Technically, every time you put your pencil on paper, you're an artist. But do you consider illustration in comic books art?*

GEORGE: I consider it illustration, because I've seen enough artists who produce very detailed work. I don't consider it an illustration medium, it just doesn't print very well. I figure I've done illustration work, and I've done comic work. Comic work is done simpler than illustration because it is printed on pulp paper, it's reduced fairly small and it's produced incredibly fast. In illustration, you may have one illustration to do a month and you can take forever on that one illustration. On a comic, you have at least 25 pages to do in a month, so you can't spend as much time on each illustration.

Illustration to me is the artist interpreting a concept. With that definition, a comic is an illustration. It has a concept and it's telling a story. As far as comparing the intricacies of what's considered classic illustration with comic book illustration, of course comic books can't match up to commercial illustration. Given the time, a comic artist probably could do a decent illustration. All the extra embellishing, all the extra detail work that goes into illustration is sometimes just a question of time, as well as talent. I find that I can do illustrations a lot faster, because I know how to break everything down into its main components. Once I get the components down, then I can embellish. Comics are illustration in its simplest form.

DAVE: *A lot of artists now are starting to work for independents or undergrounds, because they want the chance to write. Are you happy the way you are, or do you want to write?*

GEORGE: Well, I'm working on an independent project with Marv Wolfman. In school English was my favorite subject, and I wrote a lot of short stories for extra credit. I always received high marks on them because they liked my writing style. But I enjoy drawing so much that if I were writing, I'd feel self-conscious. I would think too much about the writing. Something, either the art or the writing, would suffer. The book I'm working on with Marv Wolfman, called *Janus*, for Flying Buttress Press . . .

DAVE: *Is that the same character that was introduced in* Tomb of Dracula?

GEORGE: No, it has nothing to do with the character. But Marv liked the name. The Janus character was something he conceived many moons ago. He used the name for the *Dracula* book because it was the name he created.

DAVE: *Is the character already fleshed out?*

GEORGE: The character's fleshed out. I've already received the plot and I've signed the contract with Flying Buttress.

DAVE: *What is the concept of* Janus*?*

GEORGE: It's a horror story, a version of the Pandora's Box legend in which evil is released upon the world. The world exists as it is today, but only in its shell form. Anything that had remotely to do with science is now gone. There are no electric lights. The cars no longer move. The city is decaying because there's no sewage system. The story deals with the devil, Asmodeus, trying to take over. Janus is the son of the devil and it becomes a fight between good and evil. There's great room for visuals.

". . . [Drawing comics] is fun. This is being a kid for the rest of your life . . ."

There's a double page spread which is going to be a downshot, showing what the city looks like at different angles. There's going to be shots of Hell for which I've already got crazy things in mind. I'm inking that story myself, which will be my first interior inking work.

DAVE: *Will this be a quality comic, like a "DC" or "Marvel"?*

GEORGE: It will be done in a similar quality to that of the *Saber* book, with the top reproduction and everything. It's not an underground. In fact, the publisher hopes to go for European distribution as well. It will not be a limited run series. In fact, it will be the first of four such books. It's a continuing story. The first issue is actually the second part, and the second issue will probably be how this all came about, originally. It's just that the first issue establishes the lead character. We want to establish who he is.

DAVE: *It's interesting. Wolfman used Janus as the son of God, in* Dracula *and now he uses him as the son of the devil.*

GEORGE: Right. So it seems like this guy's not sure who his daddy is (laughter) I'm looking forward to working on that. Sal Quartuccio has approached me about doing *The Art of George Perez*. He did *The Art of Neal Adams*, and *The Art of John Buscema* and he just printed *The Art of John Byrne*. *The Art of George Perez* is set for 1981.

I'm a big horror fan and hopefully *Janus* will give me enough things to do with mood and lighting. Maybe some nice grisly gore, if I can get my hands at it.

It's a totally independent production. Flying Buttress Press is the one producing it. I think they're based in either upstate New York, or in Canada. And it's being done totally independently, the way Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy worked on *Sabre*. Marv and I will co-own the copyright on the character. There'll probably be a poster done. The cover will be a painting, which I will do. It will be a quality production, and the artwork will have to be finished, including the lettering by November. So it will probably have an early to mid 1981 release.

DAVE: *Do you plan to make comic book illustration your life's work?*

GEORGE: No matter what else I do, I plan to stay in comics, as long as the business is a viable employment option. I enjoy drawing and I also enjoy telling a story. My imagination has never had so much satisfaction, had so many forms of release, as I have had while working in comics. However, there are other things that I want to do, like a painting for instance. I've always had a passion for acting, although I haven't acted since I was in high school. Also I love to sing like crazy. I used to do light opera. I'd like to get back into all that on an amateur basis. But as far as my main love, I enjoy doing what I do. I have no complaints about it. It's a great ego trip telling somebody you just met that you do comic books. It used to be a thing that people would look down on you for, but now, they're just so impressed because they don't meet too many of these characters.

DAVE: *So you wouldn't go off and do commercial illustrations, like Murphy Anderson did for a while?*

GEORGE: Oh, I would do illustrations. I wouldn't mind doing illustrations for awhile. But not at the expense of giving up the comic business entirely. Even if it meant cutting down to one book every other month, I want to get my fix of the pleasure of story telling. I'd love to break into illustration, but I don't want to leave behind the business and all the fun that I've been having. I'm not the type of artist who's going to say this is my springboard. Sure, I'd love to spring into something else. For one thing, it would be more profitable and more challenging. I can do comics very quickly, it's just part of me. But I would never belittle what I've done before, nor am I ever going to give it up. This thing is fun. This is being a kid for the rest of your life. ■

GEORGE PÉREZ' TIPS TO ASPIRING ARTISTS

This business being what it is, talent obviously has to be there. You have to at least know the basics. You can't get by with luck, the way I did, as far as not knowing the basics like perspective and the other things I had mentioned. But the important thing is *persistance*, because it's very competitive. You're competing against a lot of people.

If you're going to be coming into any editor's office, if you want to show your stuff, come in personally. Get an appointment, so you can come in and have your work assessed, and you can see what the person's talking about. Also, if you have anything to say in your defense, you may as well be there to say it. The one thing I learned, because I was just as guilty of it as just about every other artist who ever breaks in, was never go in thinking you know what the guy's going to say. I was very cocky. Every time I was given criticism I would say, "Well, I can draw better than he can," or, "I can do this." And you start thinking that you're better than you are. Take criticism. Know when the person is being critically constructive, and know when he's being abusive, because, we're all human. You may catch the guy on a bad day.

If you're going to be dealing in comics, learn how to tell a story. The secret that works for me, is that if I can look at a page, a panel page, and at least be able to tell what's going on then I have succeeded. Obviously, I can't tell the motivation. I can't tell why the character is doing what he is doing, and where it's going to lead, but I can tell what's going on visually. That is a well told story as far as art is concerned. As far as people learning film techniques, which always helps in this type of story telling, always imagine what the movie would have been like if it were silent. Then start drawing it.

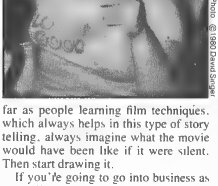

Photo © 1980 David Siegel

If you're going to go into business as a penciler, don't come in with any inked work, because you're not showing yourself to your best advantage. Learn the materials that you're supposed to be using. Learn the size of original art work, the way they would print it, and if you're going to be working in my business, be familiar with characters, if you can. As a writer, in particular, really be familiar with the characters, because they don't want people to have to constantly go do research work on a character.

Show your portfolio to a professional artist, at a convention, if you can. Preferably someone you respect, so you won't feel like you're intruding, and so you'll accept his advice because you have respect for his artwork. Once you get professional advice, take the advice and do the work. See if you can make an appointment with the artist, that if you see him again, he'll look at your work as you've progressed. Don't go into any business without any kind of professional opinion, whether it be a tutor or whether it be another artist who's already working in the business. Do not take just the advice of your friends. That's what I did, and unfortunately, most friends, they're sweet and everything, but they're not artists. They don't know.

Basically, the chief ingredient is that if you've got the heart for it and you really feel you're that good, don't be afraid. Usually if you have good potential, most editors can see it, even if it is very crude, and they'll tell you what you have to improve upon. You have to be incredibly persistent. Let them know your face. Also, try to have another job while you're doing it. Don't go in starving, because it's the type of work that, if you get work, you may not get enough to sustain you at first. So you should have something else to fall back on. Don't come in uneducated. That doesn't help you in the long run, for any job.

I think those are the basic points. And, if you're not going to go to school, get good books on anatomy perspective. Preferably, the simpler the book, as far as drawing the lines clearly, the better. If you get a book with too much shading effects or too much extra rendering, that's good, it'll teach you how to draw nicely.

If you want to work in comics you first have to learn how to draw simply, how to draw everything there, but draw it nice and clean. ■

The George Pérez Checklist

The following is a checklist of all of George Perez' professional work, complete as of August 15, 1980, courtesy of George Perez.

Comic Book Work

Marvel Comics

Astonishing Tales #25
Avengers #'s 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 154, 155, 160, 161, 162, 167, 168, 170, 171, 194, 195, 196, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202
Avengers Annual #'s 6, 8
Creatures on the Loose (Man-Wolf) #'s 33, 34, 35, 36, 37
Deadly Hands of Kung Fu (Sons of the Tiger) #'s 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30
Fantastic Four #'s 164, 165, 166, 167, 170, 171, 172, 176, 177, 178, 184, 185, 186, 187, 190, 191
Fantastic Four Annual #'s 14, 15
Inhumans #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 8
Logan's Run #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Marvel Premiere (Man-Wolf) #'s 45, 46
Marvel Super Special #4 (The Beatle's Story)
Marvel Treasury Edition #26 (Wolverine vs. Hercules—inks on Ken Landgraf pencils)
Marvel Two-In-One #'s 56, 57, 58, 60, 64, 65
Monsters Unleashed (Gulliver Jones of Mars) #8
Power Man #27
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction #2 ("Wev Toy" - reprinted in *Marvel Preview* #20), #3 ("Occupation Force")
X-Men Annual #3

DC Comics

DC Presents #26 (Teen Titans insert)
Flash #293
Flash (Firestorm) #'s 289, 290, 291, 292
Justice League of America #'s 184, 185, 186
New Teen Titans #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Covers

Avengers #'s 149, 150, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 181, 183, 184, 185, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201
Avengers Annual #8
Creatures on the Loose #34
Defenders #'s 51, 53, 54
Fantastic Four #'s 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 190, 191, 192, 193
Fantastic Four Annual #15
Flash #293
FOOM #'s 19, 20
Ghost Rider #26
Green Lantern #132
Iron Man #'s 102, 103
John Carter #'s 12, 13, 14, 18
Justice League of America #'s 184, 186
Legion of Super-Heroes #268
Logan's Run #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Marvel Premiere #'s 45, 46
Marvel Super-Special #4 (cover pencils)
Marvel Team-Up #65
Marvel Two-In-One #'s 32, 33, 50, 51, 52, 54, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66
New Teen Titans #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Nova #14
Planet of the Apes British weekly #10
Peter Parker #'s 9, 10
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (cover pencils)
Super-Villain Team-Up #15
X-Men #'s 112, 128

Magazine illustrations

Deadly Hands of Kung Fu #24
Haunt of Horror #5
Marvel Preview #12
Monsters Unleashed #7
National Lampoon
Science Digest: Oct. 1975; Nov. 1975; Jan. 1976

Fanzines and Miscellaneous

AC #2
Atlanta Con Program Book (1980)
Black Bolt poster (1976)
Comic Press #'s 2, 3
Comic Times #3
Conjure #1
Creation Convention Program Book (1976)
Enter the Dragon poster (1974)
Factors Unknown #'s 2, 3
Hot Shot #1
Hot Stuf #1
Houston Fantasy Festival Program Book (1980)
Limited Edition Portfolio (1977)
Marvel Calendar Sept. 1977, Oct. 1978, 1979, July 1980
Oracle #1
Perez-Accent on the First 'e' (1977)
Starcon 3 Program Book (1975)

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Marvel

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (212) Written by Denny O'Neil and drawn by John Romita Jr.; this issue introduces a new villain, Hydroman

CAPTAIN AMERICA (253) This issue explains what happened to Cap's World War II allies, the Invaders. Should Old Acquaintance Be Forgot' is written by Roger Stern and drawn by John Byrne and Joe Rubinstein

THOR (303) 'The Miracle of Storm' by Doug Moench. Rick Leonard and Chic Stone

MOON KNIGHT (2) Features the menace of 'The Slasher Written by Doug Moench and penciled by Bill Sienkiewicz

SPIDER-WOMAN (34) Hammer and Anvil return in this tale written by Chris Claremont and penciled by Steve Leialoha

INCREDIBLE HULK (255) The Hulk travels to Tel Aviv and meets Israel's super heroine, Sabra. Script by Bill Mantlo; art by Sal Buscema

AVENGERS (203) This issue features 'Night of the Crawlers' by David Michelinie, Carmine Infantino and Dan Green

CONAN (118) Mark DeMatteis' first Conan story is entitled 'Valley of Forever Night' and is penciled by John Buscema and inked by Ernie Chan

MARVEL TALES (123) Reprinting *Spider-Man* 146. Script by Gerry Conway, art by Ross Andru and John Romita

MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS (96) Reprints *Fantastic Four* 116, by Archie Goodwin, John Buscema and Joe Sinnott

X-MEN (141) Featuring Kitty Pryde's first test in 'Days of Future Past: Part I' by Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin

TALES TO ASTONISH (14) Reprinting *Sub-Mariner* 14 by Roy Thomas, Marie Severin and Mike Esposito

ROM (14) The Mad Thinker aided by his Android, challenge the Spaceknight' Story by Bill Mantlo; art by Sal Buscema. Cover by Michael Golden

FANTASY MASTERPIECES (14) Reprinting *Silver Surfer* 14 by Stan Lee, John Buscema and Dan Adkins. Also featured is 'The Strange Death of Adam Warlock' by Jim Starlin and Steve Leialoha from *Warlock* 11

SHE HULK (12) Jennifer Waters defends former vampire Michael Morbius in this tale written by David Anthony Kraft and drawn by Mike Vosberg and Danny Bulandi. Cover by Michael Golden

MAN-THING (8) Features the strange destiny of Sheriff John Dailey and Man-Thing's showdown with Captain Fate. Story by Chris Claremont and art by Don Perlin and Bob Wiacek

GHOST RIDER (52) A demon plots to trap Johnny Blaze in the body of the Ghost Rider forever in 'The Demon Who Loved Me' by Michael Fleisher and Don Perlin

MICRONAUTS (25) Hydra agents, Mentallo and the Fixer set out to capture the Micronauts. Written by Bill Mantlo, art by Pat Broderick and Armando Gil. Also featured is another installment of 'Tales of the Microverse'

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE (71) Features 'The Cure' and guest stars The Inhumans and Mr. Fantastic. Written by Ralph Macchio and Mark Gruenwald. Art by Ron Wilson and Gene Day

STAR TREK (10) 'Planet of the Serpent God', written by Michael Fleisher and drawn by Leo Duranona and Klaus Janson

SPIDEY SUPER STORIES (50) Anniversary issue

DAREDEVIL (168) Features 'Elektra', in which Daredevil meets a woman from his past. Written and drawn by Frank Miller, inked by Klaus Janson

MARVEL SUPER HEROES (94) Reprints *Hulk* 145 by Roy Thomas, Herb Trimpe and John Severin

FANTASTIC FOUR (226) Features 'Samurai Destroyer' by Doug Moench. Bill Sienkiewicz and Joe Sinnott

MARVEL TEAM-UP (101) Nighthawk guest stars in 'Love and Guilt.' Story by J. M. DeMatteis and art by Jerry Bingham and Mike Esposito. The issue also features a Nighthawk solo story by Mike Barr and Steve Ditko

IRON MAN (142) 'Sky Dive' by David Michelinie. John Romita Jr. and Bob Layton

PETER PARKER (50) Script by Roger Stern drawn by John Romita Jr. and inked by Jim Mooney. Also featured is the second part of the White Tiger backup series by Roger Stern and Denys Cowan

DEFENDERS (91) The Mandrill attacks the Defenders. Script by Ed Hannigan, penciled by Don Perlin and inked by Pablo Marcos

MARVEL SUPER-ACTION (27) Reprints *Avengers* 66 by Roy Thomas, Barry Smith and Syd Shores. Also featured is a British Hulk story

AMAZING ADVENTURES (14) Reprints *X-Men* 8, 'Unus the Untouchable' by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Chic Stone

STAR WARS (43) Part V of the adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back* by Archie Goodwin. Al Williamson and Carlos Garzon. This issue also contains a pinup section of the series major characters

MASTER OF KUNG FU (96) Carter's Super Midnight reproduces a new villain, Rufus Super Midnight Carter, in this story written by Doug Moench and drawn by Mike Zeck and Gene Day

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT (10) Captain Universe stars in a solo story, written by Bill Mantlo and drawn by Steve Ditko

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA (23) The last issue of this TV inspired comic. Story and pencils by Walt Simonson; inks by Klaus Janson

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN (58) Featured are two Conan stories. 'City of Skulls' by Roy Thomas, Mike Vosberg and Alfredo Alcala and 'Wolves Beyond the Border' by Roy Thomas and Ernie Chan. Cover by Clyde Caldwell

HULK (24) Featured is a black and white Hulk story, 'The Man Who Would Be President' by David Anthony Kraft, Gene Colan and Alfredo Alcala and a color Dominick Fortune story by Denny O'Neil and Howie Chaykin. Cover by Joe Jusko

CRAZY (99) More craziness from the usual gang

DC

FLASH (293) The Flash and Firestorm team-up in 'The Deadliest Man Alive' by Gerry Conway, George Perez and Bob Smith. Also featured is 'The Pied Piper's Paradox Peril' by Conway and Don Heck. (10/23)

BRAVE & BOLD (170) Nemesis teams with Batman in 'If Justice Be Blind' by Cary Bates and Jim Aparo. (10/23)

HOUSE OF MYSTERY (288) Includes stories featuring the artwork of Dan Spiegle, Jess Jodorman, Frank Redondo and E. R. Cruz. (10/23)

SUPER FRIENDS (40) Jack O'Lantern stars in 'Blamey for Sale' by E. Nelson Bridwell and Romeo Tanghal. (10/23)

GREEN LANTERN (136) Space Ranger and Eclipso return in a Green Lantern story by Marv Wolfman and Joe Staton. Also featured is an Adam Strange story by Laurie Sutton, Robin Rodriguez and Tex Blaisdell. (10/23)

UNKNOWN SOLDIER (247) (10/23)

WARLORD (41) Written by Mike Grell and inked by Vince Colletta. (10/23)

ACTION COMICS (515) Vandal Savage challenges Superman in 'This Is My World and You're Welcome To It' by Marv Wolfman, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. The back up story stars the Atom in 'Sorry—Wrong Powers' by Bob Rozakis and Alex Saviuk. (10/23)

UNEXPECTED (206) Johnny Peril battles 'The Ultimate Assassin' in a story by Mike Barr, Jack Sparling and Bruce Patterson. (10/23)

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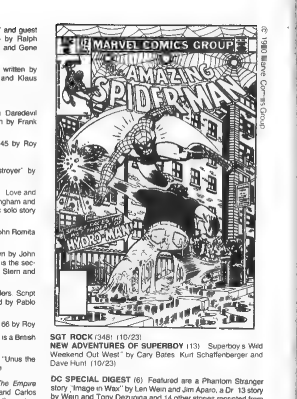

SGT. ROCK (348) (10/23)

NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY (13) Superboy's Wild Weekend Out West' by Cary Bates. Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. (10/23)

DC SPECIAL DIGEST (6) Featured are a Phantom Stranger story 'Image in Wax' by Len Wein and Jim Aparo, a Dr. 13 story by Wein and Tony Dezuniga and 14 other stories reprinted from *the pages of Ghosts!* (10/9)

BEST OF DC DIGEST (9) This issue reprints the 5 part "Batman Murderer" series by Len Wein and Jim Aparo. Also featured is "Angel—Or Devil" by Frank Robbins, Irv Novick and Dick Giordano. (10/9)

DC COMICS PRESENTS (29) Superman and the Spectre team-up in 'Where No Superman Has Gone Before' by Len Wein, Jim Starlin and Romeo Tanghal. Also featured is 'Whatever Happened to Dr. Mid-Nite?' by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Joe Gella. (10/9)

BATMAN (331) Introducing a new villain, The Electrocutioner in a story by Marv Wolfman, Mike Fleisher, Irv Novick and Frank McLaughlin. Commissioner Gordon joins the Caped Crusader in a backup story, 'Wolf in the Fold' by Mike W. Barr. Don Newton and Steve Mitchell. (10/9)

JONAH HEX (44) Jonah Hex faces a murder charge. Written by Michael Fleisher and drawn by Tony DeZuniga. (10/9)

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA (186) 'Who Can Stop the Shaggy Man?' by Gerry Conway, George Perez and Frank McLaughlin. (10/9)

WEIRD WAR TALES (95) Steve Ditko turns in a rare war story in collaboration with Bob Kanagher. (10/9)

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SUPERMAN (355): Featured are a Superman story, 'Momentus: Master of the Moon' by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte and a Superman 2020 story by Bates, Swan and Charamonte (10/9)

WONDER WOMAN (275): The Cheetah returns in 'The Claws of the Cheetah' by Gerry Conway, Jose Delbo and Dave Hunt. Also featured is a Power Girl, Huntress team-up by Paul Levitz, Joe Staton and Steve Mitchell (10/9).

THE NEW TEEN TITANS (3): Doctor Light battles the Titans in 'Beware the Fearful Five' by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal (10/9)

SECRETS OF THE LEGION (1): The mini-series begins in this story plotted by E. Nelson Bridwell, scripted by Paul Kupperberg and drawn by Jimmy Janes and Bruce Patterson (10/9)

G.I. COMBAT (225): (10/9)

SUPERMAN FAMILY (205): Featured are Supergirl's battle with the Enchantress by Jack C. Harris, Win Mortimer and Vince Colletta. Mr. & Mrs. Superman's meeting with Lex Luthor by E. Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dan Adkins. a Clark Kent story by Bob Rozakis, John Calnan and Joe Gella and a Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen team-up, 'Election Nightmare' by Marv Wolfman, Alex Saviuk, Bob Oskner and Calnan (10/9)

GHOSTS (96): Dr. Thirteen debunks a haunted airplane. Written by Paul Kupperberg and drawn by Michael Adams and Sal Trapani. (10/9)

SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE (32): Mister E. is featured in 'Those Who Pass Judgement' by Bob Rozakis and Dan Spiegle. (10/9)

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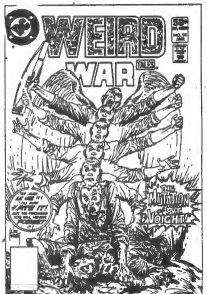

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DETECTIVE COMICS (598): The Blockbuster returns in 'Night of the Savage' by Gerry Conway, Don Newton and Dan Adkins. Batgirl is caught in 'The Tightening Web' by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo and Joe Gella. (10/23)

MYSTERY IN SPACE (115): Features the first interior US art by British artist Brian Bolland. (10/23)

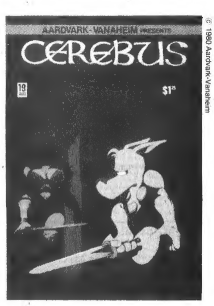
LEGION OF SUPER HEROES (271): The conclusion of the Dark Man trilogy by Gerry Conway and Jimmy Janes. (10/23)

Heavy Metal

HEAVY METAL (Oct): The special music issue features 'Legend of the Magic Tune Box' by Angus McKie. 'Rock City' by Moebius a new Trashman strip by Spain Jopodeopodo by Joost Swarte, 'Heartbreak Hotel' by Dirk Matena, 'Space Jazz' by Voss a Jimi Hendrix story 'Worlds Among Us' by Tom Yeates and 'Theft of the Golden Hic' by Hé.

Aardvark-Vanaheim

CEREBUS (19): 'She-Devil in the Shadows' by Dave Sim.



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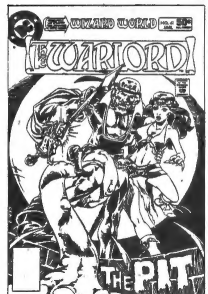

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Warren

1994 (16): Featured are 'Sci Fi Writer' by Kevin Blaine and Alex Nino, 'Agony' by Carlos Gimenez, 'Day before Doomsday' by Michael Ellis Zack and Luis Bermejo, 'Starfire Saga' by Will Richardson and Rudy Nebres, 'Baby Makes Three' by Kevin Blaine and Abel Laxamana and 'Fruit of the Grape' by Blaine and Alex Nino. (10/14)

ROOK (6): In this issue are the conclusion of the Rook tale 'Master of the World' by Bud Lewis and Lee Elias, the conclusion of 'Viking Prince' by Jose Ortiz and 'Voltar' by Will Richardson and Alredo Alcala. (10/21)

EERIE (118): Included are 'Zud Kamisch' by Jim Stenstrum and E.R. Cruz, 'Red Shot' by Bruce Bezaire and Jess Jodoman and 'The Galactic Inn' by Jose Bea and possibly another as yet undecided story. (11/4)

VAMPIRELLA (93): Featured are 'Apocalypse Inc.' by Rich Margopoulos and Rudy Nebres, 'Saint Knight' by Margopoulos and Auraleon, 'Panthe' by Margopoulos, Leo Duranona and Alfredo Alcala and 'Cobra Goddess' by Esteban Maroto. (11/4).

CREEPY (124): Included are 'Mephisto's Illusion' by Nicola Cuti, Romeo Tanghal and Alex Toth, 'Cult' by Archie Goodwin and Martin Salvador, 'Working Class Hero' by Gerry Boudreau, Carmine Infantino and Alfredo Alcala, 'Mayhem Museum' by Carl Wessler and Bullya, 'Prometheus' by Rich Margopoulos and Rudy Nebres and an as yet untitled story by Herb Arnold. (11/8)

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Whatever Happened To . . .

Gardner Fox

by **Ken Gale**

When Rich Morrissey first contacted Gardner Fox about interviewing him for *Batmania* 23 (1977), he asked, "Are you sure the fans remember me?"

It's been eleven years since Gardner Fox left comics. When he resigned from the field, he'd been writing comics for 32 years. Gardner's first script appeared as the first installment of *Steve Malone, District Attorney* in *Detective Comics* 10 (Dec., 1937). Despite starting at a rate of only a dollar per page, Fox left his law practice in 1939 to devote all his time to the comics. "He was too nice a guy to be a successful lawyer," Sheldon Mayer, his long-time editor once said.

Gardner wrote super-hero, funny animal, western, horror, detective, science fiction and humor stories for DC. He created the 40s Flash, Hawkman (Earth 1 *and* Earth II), the Justice Society of America (the first group comic series), Dr Fate, The Sandman, Starman, Adam Strange, The Star Rovers, the Silver Age Atom, the Justice League of America and many others. Gardner also chronicled the exploits of The Batman, The Spectre, the Silver Age Flash and the Hal Jordan Green Lantern. Until the 1960s, however, he never recieved a byline for anything other than the original Flash. "You'd have your name all over the book if we gave you a byline on every story you did," Sheldon Mayer told him.

Gardner did not limit his writing output to DC Comics. He worked for Popular, ME (Magazine Enterprises), Ace, MLJ, Avon, Ziff-Davis, Timely and EC. Gardner Fox wrote the script for the famous *Thun'da #1* (drawn by Frank Frazetta) and the majority of the pre-trend EC stories for Max Gaines. After Bill Gaines inherited EC, Fox scripted almost 20 horror and science fiction stories for him. Gardner estimates that he wrote 4,251 comic book stories between 1937 and 1969.

In addition to this massive volume of comic book writing, he also contributed to the pulps. Fox's first story appeared in *Weird Tales* in 1944 and he continued to sell regularly to that magazine as well as to *Planet Stories* and *Astonishing Science Fiction*. He also began writing novels one day when he was "sick in bed."

In 1968 Gardner Fox was "retired" by DC. Gardner was a member of a group of veteran DC writers including Bill Finger, Otto Binder, Ed Herron and Arnold Drake that petitioned the company for a retirement pension and a medical insurance plan. All of them had served DC faithfully for more than 20 years. Their demands were rejected by DC's new owners, Warner Communications and they were told to find work elsewhere. In one blanket policy statement Warners had rejected over 100 years of comic book writing experience. Marvel soon became the industry leader.

After leaving DC, Gardner wrote the *Doc Savage, Dr. Strange* and *Tomb of Dracula* titles for Marvel, but he didn't stay there long. The Marvel method seemed "to be doing things backwards" to him after 30 years of writing full scripts. He returned to comics for the last time with an Adam Strange "picture story" for *Strange Adventures* 226 (Oct., 1970).

At his height Gardner wrote nearly a novel a month under various pseudonyms as well as his own name. He dabbled in every one of the paperback genres. He wrote gothics, westerns, spy novels, romances, science fiction, sword and sorcery, historical novels and soft-core porn. Gardner also created two very popular sword and sorcery series, Kothar and Kyric (Kothar became Conan when Roy Thomas adapted a couple of Kothar novels in *Conan the Barbarian*). Among his many pen names are Lynna Cooper, Simon Majors, Bart Somers, Kevin Matthews, Jefferson Cooper and James Kendricks. Under the pseudonym Glen Chase, Fox has written the *C.H.E.R.R.Y. Delta* novels, a soft-core porn spy series. Gardner estimates that he wrote between 140 and 150 novels in his long career.

One of his last projects was to create a Fantasy Role-Playing game, *Warlocks & Warriors*, in 1978.

Gardner Fox retired *himself* two years ago and he cherishes the free time that retirement affords him. The sudden dearth of activity is a welcome relief and as he says, "You'd be surprised how fast the days go by."

Currently, Gardner lives in a New Jersey suburb. He has one son and one daughter, both of whom are married. His son has blessed him with four grandchildren and his daughter is "a career girl."

When pressed about his past achievements, Gardner says that, "They were fun when I did them and it's fun looking back on it," but that, "It feels good to be retired . . .a lot of fun." ■

Letters . . .

Brooklyn, NY

I found the second issue of your magazine to be a refreshing new addition to the comic/media publications, and a vast improvement over your first. It's encouraging to find a magazine covering a number of reviews and articles which are both thoughtful and diverse. The medium of comics is, after all, almost unlimited in its possibilities and I hope your magazine will reflect this potential by becoming a showcase of both new ideas and talent. Perhaps you might, in future issues, include a greater sampling of the artwork and publications outside the parameters of comics. Your guest editorial by Frank McGinty was thought provoking. The article on the Dr. Who series was informative. I enjoyed the idea of a feature like "Whiz and the kid", it gives the magazine a personal touch.

You're off to a good start. I'm impressed by the level of quality achieved by the magazine in its second issue and am looking forward to my next copy.

Best Wishes,
Russ Steffens

Thanks for your comments Russ, they are appreciated. What about the rest of you? What do you think? Write and let us know, we want to hear your opinions.

Sorry About That Chief . . .

In the interview with Joe Jusko in our first issue, Mr. Jusko did not mean to imply that the Shandra strip was his original conception. The original concept of the story was based solely upon an idea by Lynn Graeme. ■

ANSWERS TO WHIZ & THE KID

1. 2½. Black Lightning, Metamorpho, and the Phantom Stranger (Who didn't really refuse but didn't join, either.)
2. Both were Green Arrow.
3. Snapper Carr.
4. Obviously Hawkman and Hawkgirl, plus Atom, Aquaman, Elastic Man, Black Canary, and the now-widowed Flash.
5. Superman, Batman, Atom, Flash, Wonder Woman, Hawkman, Green Lantern.
6. Metamorpho, Sargon the Sorceror, and the Phantom Stranger.
7. Adam Strange.
8. J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter.
9. T.O. Morrow, with some help from a sculptor.
10. John Smith.
11. Wonder Woman, Red Tornado, and Hawkman.
12. The Magician, who certainly gave Green Arrow a run for it.
13. The ever-evil Joker.
14. Two-Face, a.k.a. Harvey Dent.
15. Fooled you! They've all appeared in the JLA.
16. Amazo.
17. Fighting supernatural evil in Rutland, Vermont.
18. The Cosmic Vampire.
19. Sandy Hawkins, ex-sidekick of the Sandman.
20. No and it still isn't. For years the members never knew who the others were out of costume.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Jim Shooter chats with David M. Singer about Mort Weisinger, poverty, *The Legion of Super Heroes* and *Marvel Comics!*

Investigating Detectives, Inc. (A behind the scenes look) by Don McGregor

Dopin Dan by Ted Richards

"Audition" An original short story by John Warner illustrated by Rick Bryant.

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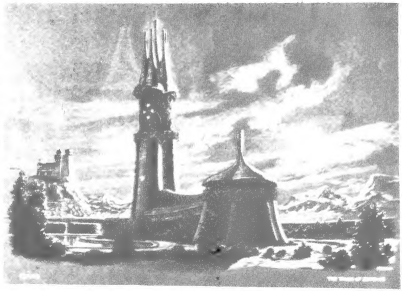

Book Date: October 1, 1980

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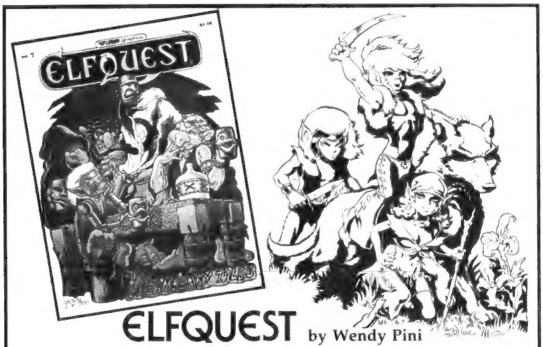

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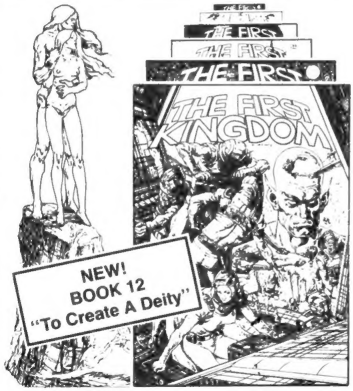

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